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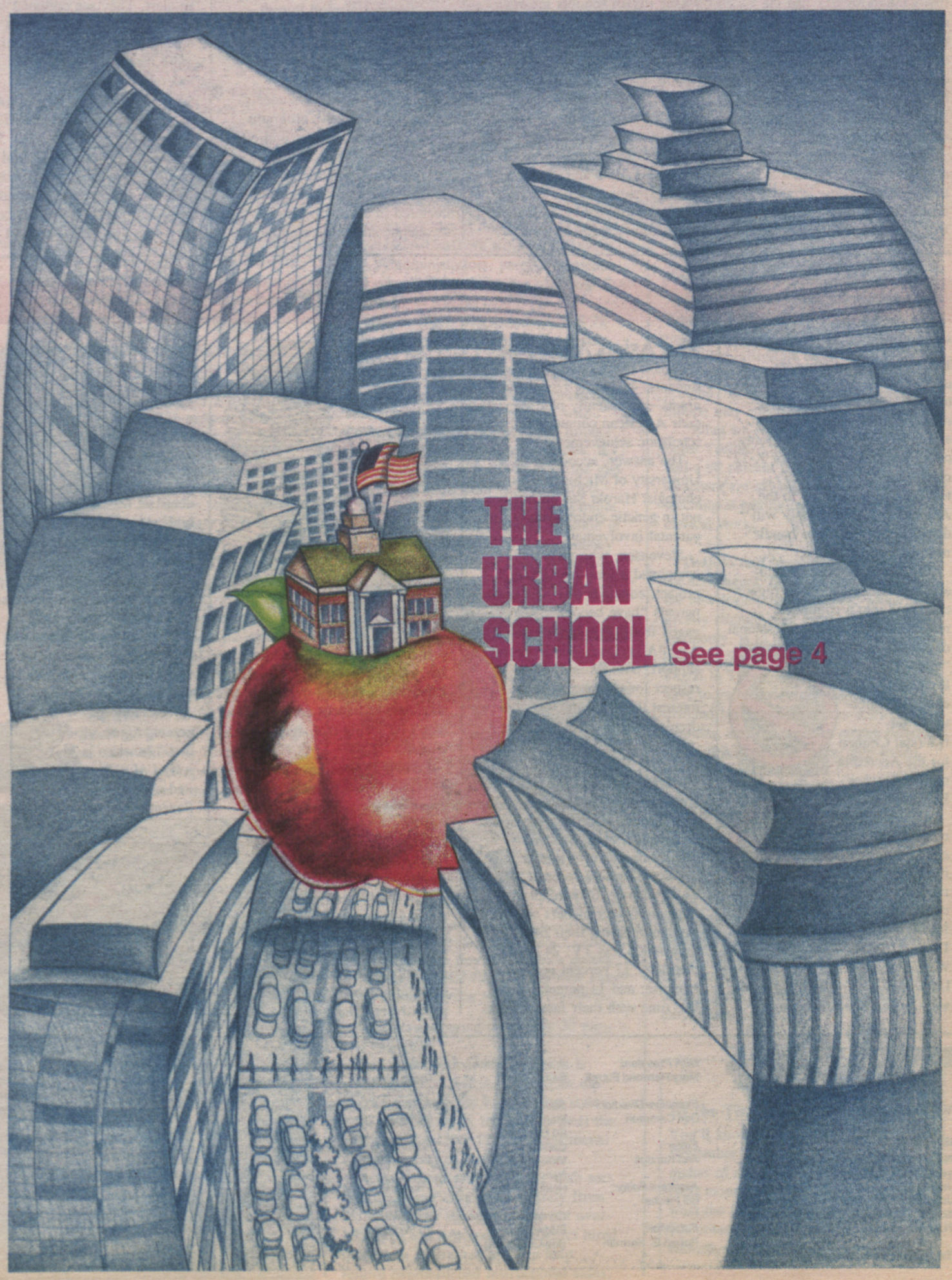
NEA Today

WASHINGTON, D.C. DECEMBER 1984

A NEWSPAPER FOR MEMBERS OF THE NATIONAL EDUCATION ASSOCIATION VOL. 3, NO. 3



THE URBAN SCHOOL

See page 4

PRESIDENT'S VIEWPOINT

Once Is Enough

Anyone who still believes that "demography is destiny" never visited this nation's inner-city public schools. I have. And what I've found—in Atlanta, Columbus, and San Francisco, in Memphis, Portland, Dallas, and Buffalo—are schools that defy the demographic odds.

In the 1970s, the population drain from such cities was dramatic. Buffalo, for example, lost 23 percent of its residents during that decade. Those who fled were those who had the means for mobility—in short, the affluent. They left behind a trapped people—the poor, the destitute, the desperate. They left behind 60 percent of the nation's Black population and 53 percent of its Hispanic population.

They also left behind—many analysts believed—school systems that would die slow deaths, systems that would wither as the poverty rate spiraled and crime sprawled.

Urban poverty has accelerated, just as the analysts predicted. Its web now encircles one of every five city-dwellers. And the urban crime rate has doubled since 1960. In urban America today, there is more hunger, more homelessness, more hopelessness.

But in community after community that hopelessness stops at the schoolhouse door.

Our urban schools are now symbols of defiance, answers to adversity. NEA members and urban parents have resisted surrender. They've shown backbone, toughness, guts, *and* a resolve not to let schools—those paths to a future less savage—be sucked into the spiral of neglect.

Between 1970 and 1980, average reading scores among Black children rose a dramatic 9.9 percent. Credit for that

Joe Di Dio

NEA President
Mary Hatwood Futrell

increase must go in large part to the programs funded by the federal Chapter 1 effort. Among disadvantaged students served by Chapter 1 programs, math and reading skills improved by more than 70 percent.

Discipline has returned to most urban classrooms—even to many centered in crime districts. Academic standards are higher. Expectations are greater. Teachers, administrators, and parents are fighting the good fight.

These proud teachers fully understand the principle articulated by the U.S. Conference of Mayors' recent report on national urban policy: unequal economic opportunity starts with unequal educational opportunity. For children locked in the cycle of poverty, the public school classroom offers the only key to liberation they will ever have. That key must not be lost.

This absolute social and moral imperative explains why the nation's mayors have issued an alert. They see ominous signs. Urban school systems have in recent years suffered far more than their share of the federal budget slash. Urban schools serve only 11 percent of the nation's public school students, but they've absorbed 53 percent of the cuts in federal aid to education. Chapter 1 funding—the source of opportunity for children cheated of opportunity—has slipped 20 percent since 1980.

Children who have known only hardship now watch as programs that might alleviate hardship are abandoned. Teachers who have courageously confronted so many obstacles now face obstacles still more imposing. Every program of hope for our cities threatens today to become a broken promise.

Now is the time for all educators to remember the lesson gained from recent years of adversity: we're in this together. Education is indivisible. A crisis in our city schools is a crisis for all of education.

This understanding has cemented the bonds of solidarity and rekindled the sense of kinship within the education community. We must now extend that togetherness. We must work to ensure that throughout this nation, a spirit of kinship defeats all selfishness.

Our nation's cities were left behind once before. Once was once too often.

TRENDS

'Lemon Aid'

The University of Virginia—nudged by negative attitudes towards schools of education—recently announced a one-year, satisfaction-guaranteed warranty on all graduates headed for K-12 classrooms. If the novice teacher doesn't live up to the A-1 rating, the university will dispatch a professor to handle necessary repair work.

The warranty offer is valuable because it "helps tie higher education into a continued responsibility for the professional development of a "teacher," says Richard Kunkel, executive director of the National Council for the Accreditation of Teacher Education.

At least four other schools of education currently have warranty (or what cynics are calling lemon aid) programs: Nebraska's Doane College, Eastern Washington State University, the University of Northern Colorado, and Oregon State University.

The Asian Advantage

Why is it that so many Oriental students—including recent immigrants—consistently outdistance their American counterparts in scholastic achievement?

The answer, according to University of Michigan psychologist Harold Stevenson, lies not in genetic endowment but in parental involvement.

Stevenson, who recently completed a four-year research project, contends that American parents "have become disengaged from the schools," while Asian-Americans "show strong support, both through great respect for teachers and the interest they take in their children's schoolwork."

Byting Our Time

Home computers, now permanent fixtures in 16 percent of all households, appear to be reordering our priorities.

According to a recent *USA Today* survey, 69 percent of home computer owners say that since purchasing their micro, they watch less TV; 24 percent read less; 17 percent get less exercise; and 14 percent spend less time with their families.

The Times In These Times

Remember the paper carriers of yesteryear—those young entrepreneurs, often middle-school age, struggling on their bicycles, a canvas sack slung over their shoulders? Chances are you won't be seeing that sight much longer.

Economic tides have pushed newspaper circulation drives into urban and rural areas, creating sprawling delivery routes that require four-wheel transportation. And more and more adults—faced with financial woes—see the delivery system as a second source of income.

Two signs of the strength of this trend: The *L.A. Times*, with a circulation of more than a million, now uses adult carriers exclusively. The same goes for the *St. Petersburg Times*, where the nation's oldest paper carrier, after 10 years of service, recently retired at age 96.

Too Many Frogs

Secondary school female students set their career goals higher than their male peers but are not confident that society offers a clear—or fair—pathway to success, according to the preliminary results of a University of Minnesota youth poll.

The poll found that young women expect to confront formidable barriers in their pursuit of a professional career: only 50 percent agree that "America is a land of unlimited opportunity." Seventy-five percent of the boys affirmed that statement.

The survey also found that roughly two-thirds of both males and females accept the "Cinderella myth"—that most young women expect a handsome prince to marry and take care of them. But most of those who expressed this view added a reservation—that there "aren't enough princes to go around."

Truth in Advertising

The Rand Corporation's recent study—*Beyond the Commission Reports*—uses the following 'want ad' to warn of the need to make teaching a more attractive profession—

WANTED: College graduate with academic major....Excellent communication and leadership skills required. Challenging opportunity to serve 150 clients daily, developing up to five different products each day to meet their needs....Job also allows employee to exercise clerical, law enforcement, and social work skills....Typical work week 47 hours. Special nature of work precludes fringe benefits such as lunch and coffee breaks. Starting salary $12,769, with a guarantee of $24,000 after only 14 years.

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SCHOOLS IN FLUX

'Reform' Sprouts Deep in the Heart

In Texas, reformers were quick on the draw . . . off in their aim.

True to Texas' reputation for doing everything in a big way, the state legislature passed a sweeping education reform law last summer that affects nearly every corner of the state's huge public school system.

Employee salaries, early childhood education, the structure of the school day, student discipline, grades, extracurricular participation, teacher education—the new state mandate addresses them all. In its final form, the school reform package—called HB 72—no longer had the support of the Texas State Teachers Association (TSTA).

The legislation took effect September 1. Now, several months later, it's becoming apparent that HB 72—while generating some long overdue positive changes—is a severely flawed law that's being unevenly applied by local school districts.

"Our major objection," reports TSTA President Becky Brooks, "is that the career teacher is not receiving a fair deal. HB 72 mandates a minimum of $15,200 for *new* teachers, and we supported that. But on the new state scale, my salary as a 15-year teacher would be only $20,900! A $5,700 increase over 15 years isn't much."

Tricia Brunhart

TSTA President Becky Brooks says the Association will monitor HB 72 closely as the reform bill takes hold: "We will insist upon fair treatment of students and school personnel. Selective implementation at the state or local level will be challenged."

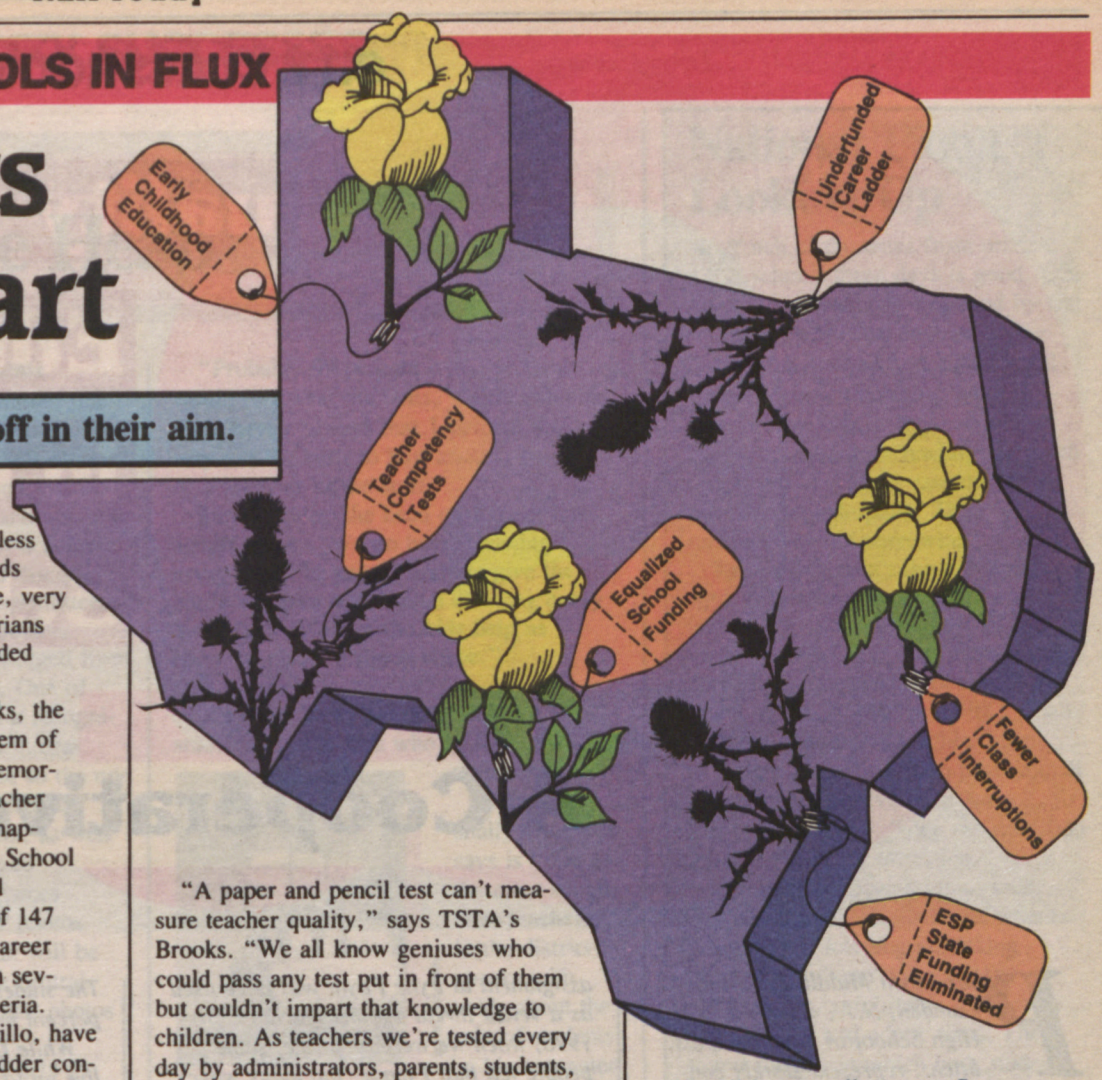
HB 72 also calls for districts to create "career ladders" (bonus payments for qualifying teachers) with the worthy goal of rewarding good teachers and keeping them in the classroom. But that goal's not likely to be reached, says TSTA, because the steps on the ladder are woefully underfinanced. Unless local districts add their own funds to the state's career ladder share, very few teachers will benefit. Librarians and counselors are totally excluded from the bonus pay plan.

As it stands now, notes Brooks, the career ladder is actually "a system of merit pay that could lead to a demoralizing atmosphere"—pitting teacher against teacher. That's already happened in the Bryan Independent School District, where the school board recently announced the names of 147 teachers to receive the $2,000 career ladder supplement—even though several hundred met the state's criteria.

Other districts, such as Amarillo, have delayed discussing the career ladder concept. The uncertainty has teachers on edge.

"We were able to beat a merit pay scheme here last year," notes Amarillo Classroom Teachers Association President Shirley Thomas. "Now the state plan might open up the idea all over again. We feel our present evaluation system is a good one. Unless we could add more money locally, we're going to wind up arbitrarily singling out certain teachers."

At least as irritating to Texas teachers is HB 72's competency test, which all teachers must pass by June 1986.



"A paper and pencil test can't measure teacher quality," says TSTA's Brooks. "We all know geniuses who could pass any test put in front of them but couldn't impart that knowledge to children. As teachers we're tested every day by administrators, parents, students, and other teachers. That's a valid test."

Despite these shortcomings, HB 72 does address some concerns that Texas teachers have raised for many years. The law reduces class sizes for the early elementary grades, establishes pre-school and summer school for students with limited English proficiency, and limits unnecessary classroom interruptions. It also provides state funds to close the gap between rich and poor school districts.

The San Antonio district, for example, has already received some $37 million in new state aid. Knowing this new money was available, the local Association went directly to its school board and came out with raises averaging more than 20 percent this year.

Jim Markham

Helen Chouinard, a Texas government teacher at San Antonio's Lanier High, likes the pay hikes she's gotten as a result of HB 72—but the new paperwork is interfering with her teaching.

Even the career ladder program is working well in San Antonio, with the district matching the $1.6 million state allocation. As many teachers as meet the criteria will receive $2,000 supplements on the last day of this school year.

Aides, whose salaries (along with secretaries') were eliminated entirely from the state salary schedule, were not overlooked in San Antonio. The district hired more than 50 clerical aides to help relieve overburdened instructional aides.

Yet all is not well, reports San Antonio Teachers Council President Jan Trujillo. Two years ago, the legislature rewrote the book on school curriculum. Local administrators have interpreted that mandate to mean that teachers must account—in writing—for nearly every minute they spend with their students.

"What we've ended up with here," notes Trujillo, "is a 20 percent pay raise and a 90 percent increase in paperwork. Teachers are saying sarcastically that their teaching is getting in the way of their clerical work."

Trujillo and her colleagues around the state agree: the only way to deal with the new legislative mandates, which have greatly strengthened local school district autonomy, is to build local Association strength. Since collective bargaining is illegal in Texas, local Associations will have to gather community support, demand regular conferences with administrators, and put together strong political action drives to elect those with sound, pro-education positions.

For its part, TSTA is challenging local districts and the Texas Education Agency (which overseees the reform program) in the courts, charging widespread violations of HB 72.

Concludes Brooks: "We intend to lobby our legislators to address the problems created by HB 72 when they convene in January, but in the meantime TSTA will be working to make the new law, despite its deficiencies, work in the best interests of students and all school employees."

—Bill Fischer

An Alternative to the Quick Fix

Like so many other states' education reform laws, HB 72—the Texas reform act enacted earlier this year—addresses some key issues but leaves a slew of others untouched. Why?

One reason is that most of these plans, debated superficially in the heat of the political arena, lack the perspective of those who know the schools best—teachers and other members of the education family.

That's why the NEA Representative Assembly established the Blue Ribbon Task Force on Educational Excellence in 1983, and why the 1984 Assembly adopted *An Open Letter to America on Schools, Students and Tomorrow*, NEA's blueprint for educational excellence.

The plan envisions a lifelong education system to help students master their subjects and participate actively in the learning process. It calls for better teacher training, improved salaries and working conditions, and local faculty authority for decisions on teaching and learning. It recognizes the need for stronger school management, for creation of a school and community partnership, and for solid financial support—federal, state, and local—to help schools achieve excellence.

"We are looking at long-term, lasting reforms, not quick-fix 'solutions,'" emphasizes NEA President Mary Hatwood Futrell. "Our proposals go beyond today and next year to the schools of the 21st century."

—B.F.

Election '84

By the Time You Read This...

You'll know the results of the November elections, which are still a matter of suspense as we go to press. Next month's *NEA Today* will analyze what the federal and state election outcomes are likely to mean for public education in the new year ahead.

CITY CLASSROOMS . . .

Quality Education in Urban Schools: A Cooperative Effort

Pyne Poynt Middle School in Camden, N.J., and Ottawa Hills High School in Grand Rapids, Mich., represent starkly contrasting urban schools.

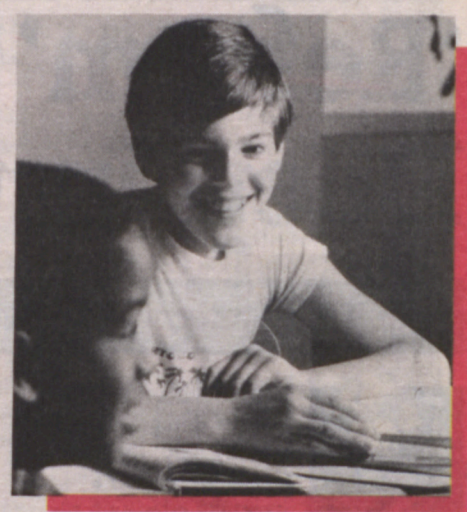
Not long ago Pyne Poynt, with a 55 percent Hispanic, almost 45 percent Black, and less than 1 percent white student population, was a "blackboard jungle," devastated by the hopelessness that characterized so many of America's urban schools.

Recalls Camden Education Association President Helene Semango, "An assignment at Pyne Poynt was once used as a veiled threat against teachers. In 1978, when we were on strike, some people felt that I made 'too many waves.' A colleague told me, 'I hear you're being transferred to Pyne Poynt.' Although it never happened, I spent some sleepless nights wondering how I would survive."

In contrast, Ottawa Hills High in Grand Rapids, Mich., has had an excellent reputation and strong community support throughout its nearly 60-year history. Its present building is 12 years old. The student body is 48 percent white, 52 percent minority.

While Ottawa Hills has continued to live up to its high standards, there's been such a drastic improvement at Pyne Poynt that today one is more likely to look at the similarities than the differences between it and Ottawa Hills. Both are urban schools where students are achieving.

Payne Poynt and Ottawa Hills aren't unique. Across the U.S., urban school staffs are taking steps to create quality learning environments.



Brad Bower

Seventh graders thrive in the relaxed atmosphere of their math class.

In Camden, N.J.

Pyne Poynt's Long, Hard Climb

Brad Bower

Pyne Poynt teacher Marilyn Allen uses one-on-one method with her music and band students.

Pyne Poynt Middle School is in the center of an economically depressed city across the river from Philadelphia. In 1977 parents were afraid to visit the school because of the high crime rate in the area. It wasn't uncommon for the staff to confiscate weapons from students. Student achievement was low. So was staff morale.

In 1979, the New Jersey Education Association introduced the Pyne Poynt staff to its School Effectiveness Training program,* which had already proved successful in Paterson.

Although many were skeptical, about 85 percent of Pyne Poynt's 85-member staff—administrators, teachers, custodians, and cafeteria workers—as well as school board members, went through the training at a weekend retreat. Their purpose was simple: to turn Pyne Poynt around.

"That session was a real eye-opener for me," recalls principal Vernon Dover. "I had frequently boasted about the *open* relationship I had with members of the staff—but I found that while we'd talked regularly, we hadn't always been communicating.

"In the first brainstorming session, one of the teachers complained about school lunches. My immediate reaction was, 'In a school where security is a major problem, in a community where drugs and crime are rampant, why would a teacher be concerned about school lunches?' I was so annoyed I told the cafeteria employee I was rooming with that I was leaving."

Dover's glad he stayed. He says he learned that what sometimes appears to him a small thing may be important to the staff and students. Before the weekend meeting was over, the staff had not only discussed all school problems—including lunches—but had begun to work out solutions.

"That meeting forced us to communicate with colleagues in a way we had never done," says Maureen Reedy, a teacher at Pyne Poynt for 16 years. "We were in planning groups with people whom we didn't normally pal around with. We unearthed some school leaders who had been hiding in the woodwork."

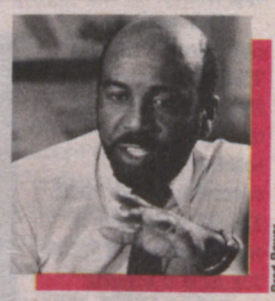
Everyone left with the feeling that "we were a team working together," Reedy says. And in the five years since that meeting, Pyne Poynt has become a different place.

Brad Bower

Janice Taylor directs her seventh grade math class.

The changes instituted in 1979 are now a part of the daily routine. For example, administrators, teachers, and custodians walk the halls between classes and during the lunch periods. Some of them frequently check the 21 entrances to keep intruders out.

At least one custodian is on duty in the school at all times. And the building is spotless. "Kids occasionally write on the walls, but we clean it up right away," says Vernon Burch, head custodian.



Brad Bower

Principal Vernon Dover: lines of communication are open now.

Pyne Poynt, which enrolls 859 sixth through ninth graders, has instituted 34 student clubs ranging from ceramics to chess, and a club activity period once a month during the school day. Only about 50 students don't participate in any activity. "But we're concerned about those 50," Dover says.

The cafeteria manager, Doris Walden, meets regularly with the student council to get menu suggestions. Walden says many of the students know her because she's a Sunday school teacher in a local church. "They respect me just as they would any teacher," she adds. She corrects students when they need correction—and "sometimes I just reach out and give someone a hug," she says.

Last year students and teachers sponsored a Saturday brunch for parents, who arrived in a steady stream. Those who had attended Pyne Poynt themselves were surprised at the improvements they saw. Many voluntered for school projects.

Among the many signs of success at Pyne Poynt: Daily attendance is up. Reading scores have improved 10 percent, math scores 13 percent, since last year. Truancy and dropout rates have declined. And staff morale is high.

* For information on the New Jersey Education Association's School Effectiveness Training Program, write to Don McNeely at NJEA, 180 West State St., Trenton, NJ 08607.

. . . CITY SUCCESSES

In Grand Rapids, Mich.

Ottawa Hills: Top of the Heap

Steve Castleberry

It isn't unusual to find Ottawa Hills students at work before and after school in the library.

Grand Rapids is Michigan's second largest city. Near its center is Ottawa Hills High, where a highly dedicated staff believes a school can't rest on its reputation if it expects to maintain excellence.

"It's a constant struggle to keep our standards high," says Wendell Lubbinge, a business education teacher.

Principal Edward West points to staff and community input into all school activities as the reason for Ottawa Hills' accomplishments. School committees that welcome parents as members include the curriculum and instruction, school and community relations, academic boosters, and discipline and control committees.

Many productive ideas have emerged from these groups. One of the newest is a recognition program in academics similar to the one for sports. Starting this year, students with high academic achievement, as well as those who have shown marked improvement, will have their names inscribed on a plaque and their photos mounted on a picture board that will be on display in the school's huge central mall, "right beside the names and photos of the athletic stars," West says.

For those students who need help in their classes, the school has two assistance programs: parent and peer tutors. Parents volunteer their time; students receive a stipend. Students may refer themselves for assistance, or a teacher may make recommendations.

Teachers and administrators also develop one-on-one relationships with students who are having difficulty maintaining good grades.

An "indoor suspension" program—where students who have broken a school rule continue to take classes but are isolated from other students—prevents the missing of important class time. Outdoor suspension is limited primarily to offenses that are drug related or incidents that may cause harm to others.

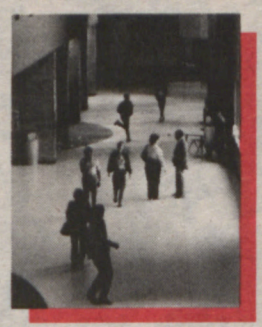
But West says that drugs aren't a major problem. "We've found students drinking beer, but even that's rare," he reports.

Ottawa Hills does have a dress code. Students aren't allowed to wear shorts or hats. They also can't wear belts with studs on them.

"Probably 99 percent of the students would just wear the belts," West explains, "but there's always that 1 percent that may use the belts to hurt another student or a member of the staff."

Steve Venlet, the head custodian, has a staff of 14. "We do basic cleaning every day," he says, "and we give the entire complex a thorough cleaning every three days. Most of the kids help us keep the place in tiptop shape."

Teachers describe Ottawa Hills students as nice kids who believe in themselves.



Steve Castleberry

Ottawa Hills' mall attracts students between classes and at lunch time.

Grant Marshall, who West says is "one of the most sought-after teachers in the district," speaks with pride about the mix of students in his computer class.

These students, about equally divided racially, are full of enthusiasm—just what a teacher needs to work hard, Marshall says.

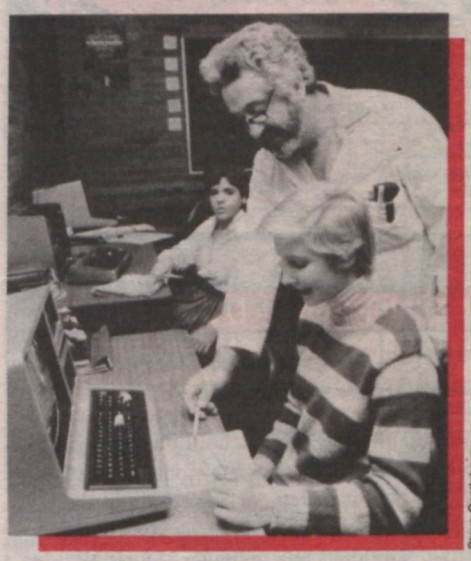
"Students who take computer programming have completed algebra and trigonometry," he explains. "They have analytical minds. Kids of all races excel in this class because I'm fair with them. When they find out that I expect the best from them, they produce."

Assistant principal Bob Hendrickson, an Ottawa Hills alumnus, gives one of the best tributes to the school.

"I'm 51 years old," he says. "I tell the kids, 'I've been away from Ottawa Hills for only four years since I entered seventh grade here.' I came back as a teacher and coach. My four sons attended this school, and they all got an excellent education. I felt comfortable when they went away to college because I knew they were well-prepared.

"The mixture of all kinds of people, the overall cooperation, the ability to meet students' needs at every level, the feeling that anyone can succeed—that's what makes this a sound and healthy school."

—Marian Clayton



Steve Castleberry

"When kids find out I expect the best from them, they produce," says computer teacher Grant Marshall.

Steve Castleberry

Teachers see Ottawa Hills students as "nice kids who believe in themselves."

Parents Play a Big Role In Improving City Schools

Parents in urban areas have a major role to play if their students are to achieve—and more and more of them are accepting this responsibility.

St. Petersburg (Fla.) High School, cited last year by the U.S. Department of Education as an outstanding school, houses 2,050 ninth through twelfth graders in a 55-year-old building.

It was parents who led a recent fight for physical improvements. Organized in a committee called "Fair Share," they compared the building to 14 other Palmetto County schools and took their findings to the school board.

The parental pressure has resulted in a $6 million allocation for building improvements that will include a gymnasium, a science building, and renovations in every classroom.

In another example, at Roosevelt Perry Elementary School in the heart of Louisville, Ky., students are making remarkable progress. Four years ago school counselor J. Back (now the principal) and the district's attendance worker visited parents and strongly urged them to cooperate with the school in improving both attendance and academic performance.

With teachers placing heavy emphasis on specific academic objectives—and with reinforcement from parents—the 520 kindergartners through fifth graders have shown steady gains in every academic area.

—M.C.

National Picture: Looking Up

Much of the news from urban schools these days is good. Educational achievement measured by test scores is up. Recent reports by the National Assessment of Educational Progress show that urban students—especially in elementary schools—have increased their reading and math test scores at a faster rate than their nonurban counterparts. The gap remains, but it's narrowing.

Test scores aren't the only upbeat sign. Attendance and discipline are improving, as are a number of subjective factors. The Ford Foundation's City High School Recognition Program, which in 1982 and 1983 identified and honored 142 public inner-city high schools, sent 16 professional educators to observe in urban schools across the country. They reported finding a sense of revitalization.

The Ford observers found stable and orderly schools—schools where teaching and learning are taking place. They found desegregated schools with comfortable interaction across racial and ethnic lines. They found schools in which both students and staff take pride.

Education experts emphasize that improvements in city schools are the result of sustained efforts over the past 15 to 20 years. Don Leu, dean of education at Portland State University and a consultant to several large urban systems, points to the impact of federal programs such as Head Start and Title I (now Chapter 1), and to the research on effective schools—all begun during the mid-1960's.

New leaders have also helped. "In the past several years there's been a turnover in the leadership of most urban school systems," reports a spokesperson for the Council of the Great City Schools, an organization of the nation's 35 largest urban school districts. "The current leadership is more likely to have come up through that system, and to be Black, Hispanic, or female. This leadership tends to have higher expectations of the kids—and to be more sensitive to the damage the system can do to them."

But the picture in America's urban schools isn't entirely rosy. While test scores are up, they're still far below the national norms.

And test scores aren't everything. "Good scores are not necessarily a reflection of quality education," warns Leu. "Standardized tests focus on reading, writing, and arithmetic skills—what's called lower-level learning. It's very important, but it's not total education. It doesn't include problem solving, science, technology, social sciences, the arts, or the ability to communicate."

Leu and others worry about the current national preoccupation with test scores—and about whether America is creating a two-tier educational system. "The basic question today is whether all children will have access to education in the higher-level skills," Leu says. "Will we provide equity as well as excellence?"

—Heidi Steffens

HUMAN RIGHTS

Don't Buy Coors Beer!

For anyone who cares about basic human rights in the workplace, there's one beer to avoid: Coors.

The Adolph Coors Company, a major corporate powerhouse based in Colorado, has emerged as a ringleader in the right-wing effort to deny American working people their rights to organize freely at their workplaces.

That's why the 1984 NEA Representative Assembly—the Association's highest decision-making body—voted to recommend support of the national AFL-CIO boycott of Coors Beer and other Coors products. After studying the question thoroughly, the NEA Board of Directors at its September meeting approved NEA participation in the boycott.

The boycott effort against Coors began seven years ago after workers at the Coors brewery in Golden, Colo., struck against the company's oppressive labor policies.

Workers were outraged by mandatory employee lie detector tests—which included questions on employees' marital and sexual practices—and by the company's attacks on their seniority system. Soon after the strike started, Coors demanded that the union give up contract clauses that prevented the company from packing the bargaining unit with "freeloaders"—workers who received the benefits of union representation without becoming members.

The strike was never settled. Coors hired permanent strike-breakers to replace the workers who walked out. The Denver brewery workers' union, a directly affiliated local of the AFL-CIO, is now trying to get Coors to certify in writing that workers may join any labor group, free from intimidation.

NEA activist Judy Whaley of Thief River Falls, Minn., presented the proposal that NEA join the boycott against Coors at last July's NEA Representative Assembly in Minneapolis.

"Any attack on a collective bargaining process in either the private or the public sector makes our task of attempting to move national collective bargaining for public sector employees more difficult," Whaley pointed out. "It hurts workers, and it hurts teachers."

The Adolph Coors Co. is run mainly by two brothers—William Coors (chairman and chief executive officer) and Joseph Coors (president and chief operating officer)—both known for their extreme right-wing views and connections.

Joseph Coors is a substantial contributor to right-wing organizations, including Phyllis Schlafly's anti-ERA campaign. He is probably best known for helping bankroll the Heritage Foundation, a major "think tank" for the Reagan Administration. The Heritage Foundation backs tuition tax credits and vouchers to "promote educational excellence."

William Coors found himself at the center of a national scandal last February when he gave a speech that concluded that Blacks in Africa "lack the intellectual capacity to succeed, and it's taking them down the tubes." An explosive wave of protests forced an apology, which many found wanting.

—Bob Gruenberg

"The story of Brewery Workers Local 366 has been one of tragedy and hope. With support and assistance now, Coors workers can win a victory that will affirm their human rights and dignity. It is a boycott to show Coors that the Bill of Rights doesn't stop at the plant gate."

—David Sickler, Brewery Workers Local 366

A 1983 protest march against Coors in Whittier, California.

Building Community Partnerships

"Children, Families, and Public Schools: Building Community Alliances for Learning" will be the theme of NEA's 23rd annual conference on human and civil rights in education.

Scheduled for the weekend of February 22-24, 1985, in Washington, D.C., the conference will explore ways the public schools, families, communities, and local and state Associations can work together to help overcome the problems that inhibit learning and narrow children's chances in life.

Representatives of parent and community groups, along with Association members and leaders, will discuss plans for working together to deal with these problems at conference sessions on hunger and nutrition, child abuse, latchkey children, opening new technology to minorities and women, and the need to maintain cultural identity when schools are desegregated.

For a registration form or further details, contact NEA Human and Civil Rights, 1201 16th St., N.W., Washington, DC 20036 (202/822-7700). If you return your registration form and check by February 4, you'll get a $25 discount on the conference fee, bringing the cost down to $90.

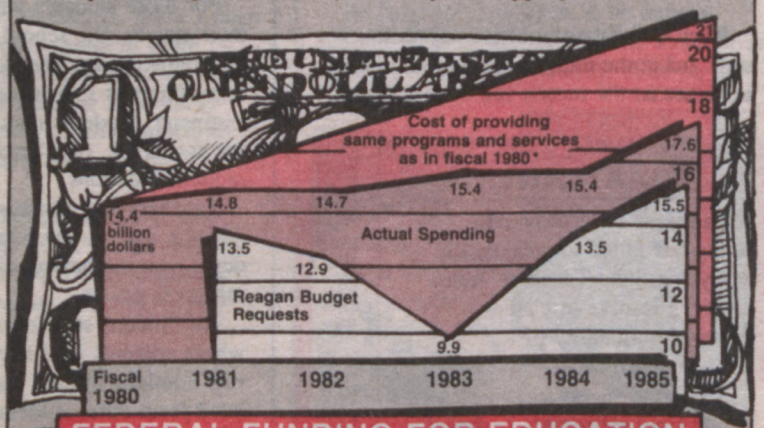
WASHINGTON WATCH

Glancing back as 1984 winds down, it's been a year of substantial progress on Capitol Hill—and all NEA members can take pride in the battles won.

Contributing to the victories were the Association's increasing sophistication in using lobby-by-mail strategies, in rallying the 1,100 members of the congressional contact team to bring constituent pressure to bear on their representatives at critical moments, and in keeping congressional attention on issues of concern to NEA members.

✔ During the second session of the 98th Congress, which began last January and ended in October, 35 major pieces of NEA-backed legislation were passed and sent to the President for his signature. Many were of top priority for education's progress: emergency **math/science teaching** aid (seen as a forerunner to the comprehensive American Defense Education Act); funding for school **asbestos** hazard removal; **"magnet schools"** desegregation assistance; a revamping and extension of the **vocational education** program; and extensions of such major federal programs as **Head Start**, **Follow Through**, **impact aid**, **women's educational equity**, **Indian education**, and **bilingual education**.

✔ Getting most of these education measures through Congress meant an uphill battle with an Administration high on education rhetoric but low on funding. For example, the Reagan Administration's **education budget** request for the 1985-86 school year—$15.4 billion—was $5.7 billion short of what it should have been just to fund programs at their 1980 levels, adjusting for inflation. NEA and its allies on Capitol Hill managed to boost the final bill to nearly $18 billion—significantly more than requested by the President and over 16 percent higher than the previous year's appropriation.



FEDERAL FUNDING FOR EDUCATION

Source: Committee for Education Funding

*Fiscal 1980 appropriation, adjusted by Consumer Price Index—Urban (fiscal 1980-84, compounded)

✔ Equally important was the defeat of several **education-damaging proposals**—tied to church-state issues—brought up repeatedly during the session. Down the tubes went tuition tax credits, a school prayer constitutional amendment, and education vouchers. Also defeated: attempts to expand block grants and dismantle various education programs. The so-called "equal access" act, encouraging high schools to make space and time available for meetings with a religious purpose—did pass, but in a watered-down form that removed the earlier version's harsh penalties and requirements for teacher participation.

✔ NEA also lobbied for—and won—passage of a wide range of other bills that benefit members, including a program to restore the solvency of **Social Security**, without drastic benefit cuts; a **retirement equity** law improving the treatment of women; protection of **disability insurance** benefits while a disabled worker's case is under review; reinstatement of the federal **income tax exemption** for employer-provided educational assistance; authorization for a federal study of **toxic substances** in schools; and continuation of the family contribution schedule for **Pell grants** and **guaranteed student loans**.

✔ It's a truism on Capitol Hill that one rarely gets all that one asks. So the NEA-backed **American Defense Education Act** was approved overwhelmingly by the House for consideration on a test vote but did not receive final action. ADEA has been promised early attention when the new 99th Congress convenes in January. This landmark bill would funnel general federal aid directly into local school districts, bypassing the state education bureaucracies. If fully funded after passage, the ADEA would hike total federal assistance for K-12 students by about 50 percent.

State Side

WEST

Nebraska State Education Association (NSEA) members spent their spare time this fall ringing doorbells to collect signatures on a petition to be presented to the state legislature in January.

The petition asks the lawmakers to raise the state sales tax by one cent, which would yield an additional $100 million a year. The Association is proposing that the new revenue be used to reduce local property taxes and raise teacher salaries.

NSEA president Pat Richey comments, "We've officially adopted better teacher salaries as our top legislative priority. The intensity of our efforts to get a penny added to the sales tax demonstrates our commitment to this goal."

Nebraska's state sales tax is currently three and a half cents on each dollar. Additional local taxes make the total higher in some areas.

MID-ATLANTIC

An adverse federal court ruling has failed to weaken the Maryland State Teachers Association's resolve in challenging the constitutionality of a new pension reform law.

The law, passed last spring, would limit retirement benefits for some state employees, including almost 34,000 teachers.

This fall a U.S. District Court judge dismissed a class action suit filed against the state by the Association and four co-plaintiffs—and then denied their motion to reconsider.

But "the battle is far from over," stresses MSTA president Janice Piccinini. MSTA has now filed an appeal in the fourth federal circuit court in Richmond, Va. MSTA and its co-plaintiffs have also asked the district court to enjoin the state from implementing the new law until the appeals process is completed.

MIDWEST

The message that school districts need additional funding if they're to achieve excellence hasn't gotten through to Iowa's political leaders, who keep bailing out tight state budgets by cutting aid to schools.

Since 1980, three across-the-board budget cuts initiated by Governors Robert Ray and Terry Branstad, combined with other legislative actions, have reduced state aid to schools by $102 million.

"Clearly the major obstruction to excellence is not in the schoolhouse but in the statehouse," says Iowa State Education Association (ISEA) President Phoebe Tupper. "Using school aid to balance the budget has savaged the schools and shortchanged students, teachers, and the public."

When the legislature convenes again in January, ISEA will be presenting a comprehensive plan for tax reform. The package is designed to put the state government on a pay-as-you-go basis—and to provide school districts with funds for improving teacher salaries.

The Association has been conducting public forums around the state to promote its tax reform ideas. ISEA also commissioned a statewide public opinion survey recently, which revealed that Iowans are willing to pay more taxes to provide more money for local schools.

NORTHEAST

In a special September session devoted to education, the Maine legislature approved a package of 13 reform measures with a price tag of $92 million over the next three years.

Maine Teachers Association President Tom Harvey hailed the initiatives—set to take effect next August—as "the first step for effecting major reforms in our schools and the teaching profession."

The omnibus law, drafted by a commission appointed by the governor, establishes a teacher incentive grant program that will pay all teachers an added $1,000 per semester beginning in the 1985-86 school year.

It also provides grants to innovative schools, sets tougher statewide requirements for high school graduation, mandates more standardized student testing, and creates forgivable loans for prospective teachers.

SOUTHEAST

How will today's close scrutiny of public education by commissions, committees, and legislatures affect classroom instruction and school employees? The Georgia Association of Educators (GAE) addressed that question this fall in a series of seven special after-school, drive-in conferences for Association members across the state.

Of specific concern were reform proposals—formulated with considerable input from GAE but none directly from grassroots school employees—that will be coming to the state general assembly this winter from an education review commission created by the governor over a year ago.

The seven conferences provided a forum for presentations on the reform proposals by members of the commission, reactions by GAE, and then small-group work sessions where Association members strategized ways to help get the positive proposals through the legislature while defeating the more negative ones.

"It's important," says GAE president Ed Deaton, "that everyone suggesting major changes in our public schools realize the effect their suggestions will have on the classroom. The only way for them to find that out is to make local school employees a part of the discussion. That's just what our program was designed to do."

PACIFIC

The Far Right in Idaho laid siege to the Idaho Education Association and NEA this fall, launching a series of virulent attacks that peaked just prior to the November election.

"We were used as the whipping boy to discredit candidates who supported public education," says IEA President Connie Hutchison.

The anti-IEA/NEA campaign has included 200,000 copies of a "comic book" inserted into Idaho newspapers, as well as a book, several ultraconservative newsletters, and the formation of Independent Educators of Idaho—an "alternative" to IEA that opposes collective bargaining, lobbying, and political action by teachers.

The attacks were all similar, using crafty editing to present NEA resolutions and policies—and by implication teachers—as immoral and uncaring.

"It's disturbing to be the victim of attacks," Hutchison wrote in a guest editorial in Idaho's largest newspaper. "But no other group speaks out as loudly or strongly for public education as NEA. No other group works as hard as we do to elect pro-education candidates. That's not immoral—it's our responsibility."

PRIORITY: RECRUITMENT

Ohio Education Association

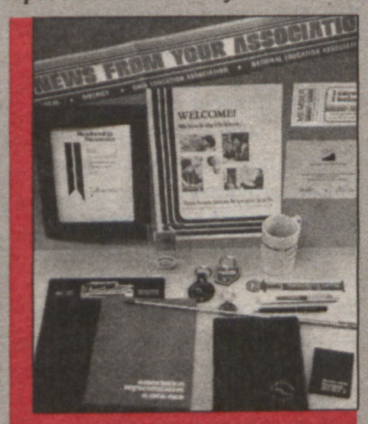
Ohio Goes All Out To Build Membership

Personal contact at the local level is the key to successful membership promotion, maintains Ohio Education Association (OEA) President Don Wilson (*above*).

He should know. At last summer's NEA Representative Assembly, Ohio won honors as the state affiliate with the biggest annual gain in members. Ohio's membership rose from 76,860 to 80,502 over the last school year.

"Every committee, every division, every leader, and every staff member has a responsibility to promote membership," explains Wilson. "The recruitment of members has become everyone's business."

Promotional materials are an important part of that recruitment strategy. Products and themes are decided a year in advance. Each winter, the next year's membership materials are already being prepared. They're delivered to UniServ offices across the state over the summer. More and more of Ohio's local Associations now have membership drives running at full speed on the first day of school.



In the end, of course, the materials—as many as 26 different pieces each year—are only tools. It's *people* who persuade their colleagues to join, by citing OEA's record as an aggressive proponent of educational excellence, as a political power in the state legislature, and as a staunch defender of employee rights.

OEA "membership paceseter" awards each year recognize local Associations and leaders for scoring large percentage or numerical gains, sustaining 90 percent of their membership potential, achieving "100 percent buildings," and the like.

Ohio's new collective bargaining law, which went into effect last April, has further boosted membership by awakening interest in OEA among school support employees in districts where there's previously been no effective bargaining agent.

What's in store for this year? "Early reports indicate another substantial membership increase," says Wilson. "And, in keeping with our commitment to planning and to making membership a continued priority, we've already begun work on our 1985-86 campaign."

Local Look

LOUISIANA

To walk off the job, take up a picket sign, and risk losing your job takes courage.

And NEA members in St. John the Baptist Parish showed plenty of it over a nine-week period. They stuck together. And they won.

Even though money was available, school employees had not received a local pay increase since 1979.

In August, when the St. John Association of Educators (SJAE) presented its case for a 5 percent pay increase and asked for bargaining rights, the school board responded by hiring a "union busting" lawyer.

Faced with an intransigent board, the employees struck. What was gained after nine weeks off the job?

A pay hike of almost 12 percent above a state raise of 5.8 percent retroactive to July 1.

The public will decide in a referendum January 19 whether SJEA will be recognized as the bargaining agent.

Community and labor support was critical to the Association's success.

KENTUCKY

Teachers would be better off, the Hopkins County Education Association (HCEA) contends, if they were paid by the hour.

An HCEA survey of its almost 500 members on how many hours of personal time they spend on one activity alone—preparing for the start of a new school year—found they average 30 hours each. In addition, many have family members help them, and some spend up to $100 of their own money on classroom materials.

The time donated to the school system as each new year begins goes for such uncompensated tasks as arranging bulletin boards, painting and refinishing furniture, attending learning and computer centers, and compiling lesson plans.

"Teachers' salary schedules are given for the year—and by the day," explains HCEA President Pat Ryan. "The public sees this and envies our '9-to-3' schedule and our 'free summers.' If we were paid by the hour, people would have a better idea of all that we do."

VIRGINIA

Association members throughout the Tidewater area helped implement the lavish plans of a Norfolk radio station owner to honor teachers in a tangible way during last September's Teacher Appreciation Day.

Bishop L.E. Willis, owner of radio stations WOWI and WPCE, sponsored an evening gala for all teachers within his stations' 100-mile broadcasting range. At his urging, local businesses donated some $50,000 in cash and merchandise for teacher prizes. Top prize was an $8,700 Pontiac plus $1,300 cash.

Members from all local Associations in the listening area helped plan the celebration. Some 6,500 teachers turned out for the event, which Education Association of Norfolk President Ed Ellis hopes will become an annual tradition.

"With teachers so much in the limelight," Ellis says, "it's an opportune time for efforts to better our relationships with the community."

NEVADA

The 'good ol' boy' process for choosing school administrators has been dealt a serious blow in Washoe County.

The Nevada Equal Rights Commission ruled recently that the Washoe school district discriminated against high school business teacher Sandra Slawnik when she applied for a vice principal's position in 1981. The commission ordered the district to offer Slawnik the first middle school vice principal's job that opens up—and to pay her the salary difference between teacher and vice principal for two years.

Washoe County Teachers Association (WCTA) President Rita Hambleton, who was a member of the selection committee when Slawnik applied for the vice principal's job, provided crucial testimony in the case.

"If I hadn't been an Association member," Slawnik says, "I simply couldn't have afforded to pursue this complaint—either financially or emotionally."

The school board plans to appeal the ruling.

OKLAHOMA

Only 750 people live within the boundaries of the tiny Graham school district 90 miles south of Tulsa—and the superintendent can name every family.

So during the holiday season, it's easy for the 15 teachers and two administrators—all of whom are Association members—to thank local residents for their support of the district's single school. How? By giving each household a bag of candy, fruit, and locally grown pecans.

Says high school business education teacher Pam Morris, "We feel that the project is good for school–community relations. Everyone in the school helps wrap the 800 sacks."

To pay for the candy, the school staff organizes a community bake-off, which typically produces some 150 pies that are then auctioned off.

MISSOURI

Six months ago, Lee's Summit NEA was a tiny local numbering just 14 members among the 400 teachers in its suburban Kansas City school district. Membership now stands at nearly 200—and rising—thanks to the way the school board and administration have been misleading and misinforming teachers—and the general public.

It all started at the beginning of last school year, when the district sought—and won—voter support for a school bond issue to finance building improvements. But once the bond passed, the board changed its plans for using the new money, without notice.

Then last April the superintendent reported that despite a lack of money for salary increases, no teachers would lose their jobs. Shortly afterwards, several nontenured teachers were let go. (They were soon rehired under public pressure.)

In June the district's business manager discovered $432,000 in "unanticipated funds." This money went to teachers as bonuses, rather than as an addition to the salary schedule.

Amid all the new interest in the Association, Lee's Summit NEA leaders are busy mapping out plans for aggressively representing teacher interests.

DEATH OF AN OREGON TOWN

Kids Lose Homes, Teachers, and School

Casey Kaczka sits on a pile of concrete slabs that used to be the floor of the Valsetz school. Only the slabs and the school sign remain—and they too are due to be plowed under.

Valsetz is gone. The town has been razed and burned, its single public school sold to the highest bidder and carted away.

Valsetz was a company town of 200 people in the Coast Mountains of northwest Oregon, 16 miles up a winding, gravel logging road. Boise Cascade, the huge lumber products company, owned the workers' houses, the one paved street, single store, land, and the lumber mill.

About the only things the company didn't own were the school and a big old house converted into four apartments for teachers—those were owned by the school district.

In December 1983, Boise announced the mill would close in February—the 50-year-old town in June. Today all that remains is the paved street, and it too is soon to go.

"Last winter and spring were very difficult," recalls Casey Kaczka, who taught the lower elementary grades. "Families who'd lived there for three generations lost their jobs, their homes, their town.

It was hardest on the kids. As people moved out, the company would burn their houses down. They burned houses right across from the school. The kids would look out the window and see homes in flames."

An agreement negotiated by the local school board and the Valsetz Education Association (VEA) provided a severance payment equal to one year's salary for every employee who remained through the end of the school year. The board also set up a $400,000 scholarship fund for former students.

Boise Cascade challenged both the severance payments and the scholarship fund in court, where the 10 VEA members were represented by an Oregon Education Association attorney. An out-of-court settlement retained the full severance payments and slightly reduced the amount of the scholarship fund.

"A lot of us figured Boise's a big company, and they'd get their way," recalls Chuck Laman, who taught high school in Valsetz for five years and was VEA president for two. "They probably would have, if not for the support we got from our state Association. Ten teachers couldn't fight Boise Cascade."

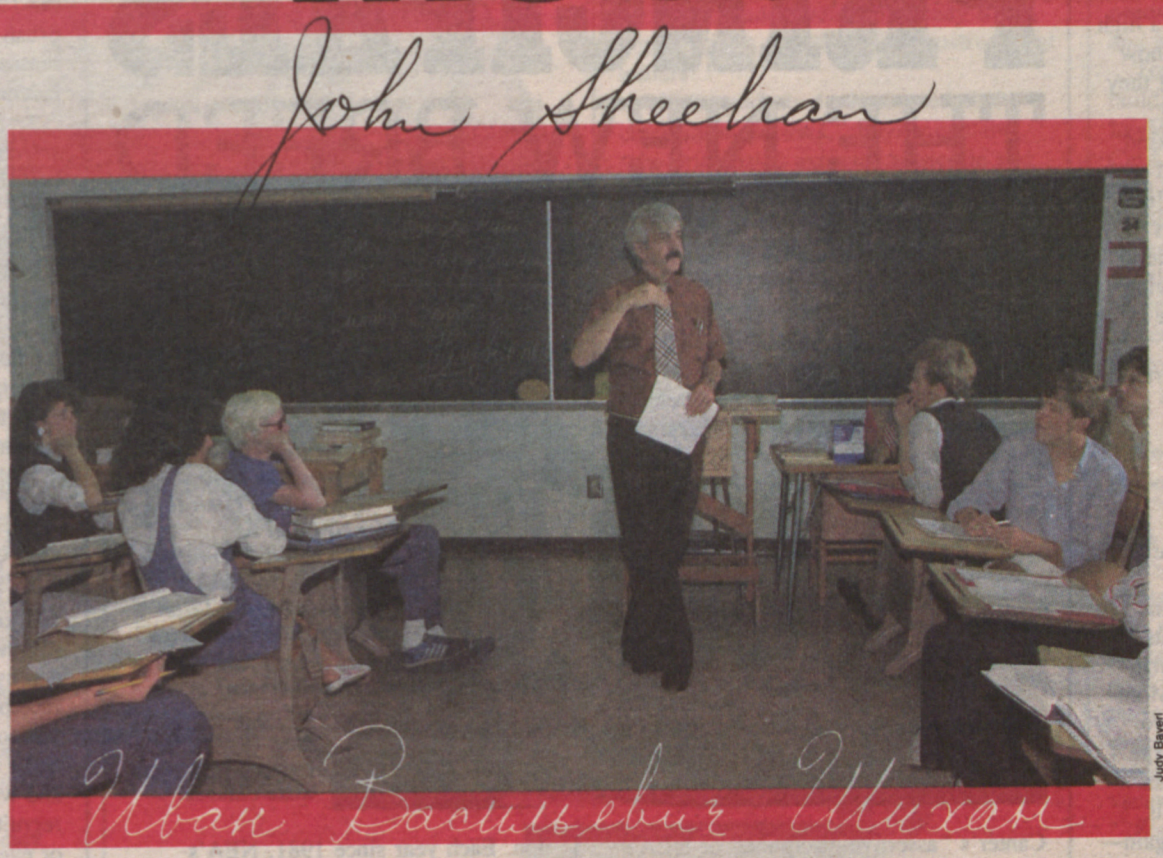
The severance pay helped, but teaching in Valsetz wasn't easy last year.

"We tried to help the kids get ready to move into new towns with larger schools," says Casey Kaczka. "It was hard—there was so much bitterness. The people in the town scattered—there aren't jobs in this part of Oregon."

The Valsetz teachers scattered too. Four found other teaching jobs; three are still looking. Kaczka, unable to find another job, is working on her master's in rural special education. Laman retired a few years earlier than planned. Michael Sullivan, VEA president last year, tragically drowned off the Oregon coast last summer.

"Michael's death was the final blow," says Laman. "First we watched the town die, then we lost a wonderful teacher and a fine young man."

Meet:



Living the Language of the Czars

What's the best way for an American teacher to learn about the latest developments in Russian linguistics and literature?

By studying in the Soviet Union, says Association member John Sheehan, who teaches Russian and French at Winter Park (Fla.) Senior High. Last summer Sheehan and 32 other teachers of Russian from across the U.S. spent eight weeks at Moscow State University.

A 15-year teaching veteran, Sheehan has taught Latin, speaks some Japanese, and says his German is "pretty much limited to ordering beer."

NEA staff writer Marian Clayton recently asked Sheehan about his summer in Moscow—and his life as a foreign language teacher.

Was this your first trip to the Soviet Union?
No, I was there in 1967 on a study tour. Then I went back in 1970 for six months as an interpreter/guide for a U.S. Information Agency exhibit.

I understand that this summer exchange program between the University of Moscow and Georgetown University is primarily for higher education faculty. Were you the only high school teacher to make the trip?
There were three of us out of the 33. We had to apply to the International Research and Exchange Board in New York that runs the program for the State Department. Our applications were in both English and Russian.

Then the board selected finalists to be interviewed in New York. The interviews were in both languages also.

Did you have any contact with the Soviet English teachers who came here to study at Georgetown University?
No. And except for the university instructors, we didn't meet any teachers in Russia.

What did you hope to gain from the trip?
I wanted to update my knowledge of the language and the country.

Were you successful?
I guess so. The courses were excellent, but we found it difficult to make contact with the average Russian citizen.

The relations between our two countries are so strained that Soviet citizens felt it wiser not to be seen with us.

Did you try talking with people on the street?
Oh, sure. They'd respond to questions, but they were reluctant to strike up friendships.

Judy Bayerl

We weren't invited to anybody's home.

Was anyone curious about life in the U.S.?
We didn't get any questions this time, but on my previous trips I found many Soviet citizens fascinated with America. They were mostly interested in the standard of living. They knew a lot more about America than we did about the Soviet Union.

Did the lifestyle of the average citizen seem the same as when you were in Moscow in 1970?
The citizens were better dressed than when I was there before. I noticed that you can't tell their teenagers from ours. They're all wearing the latest American jeans.

As I indicated before, the citizens were much less eager to talk with us. I sensed that they're more tense.

Do you like Russian food?
It can be very good, but it can also be monotonous if you eat out a lot. We ate in restaurants most of the time.

The Russians have many different names for little strips of meat and gravy that all turn out to be essentially the same thing.

Do any of the restaurants serve foods from other countries?
Moscow has about three pizzerias. I didn't try any of them, but those who did said their food was pretty good.

Where were you housed?
We stayed in a dormitory at the university. Most of the students on campus during the summer were foreigners.

Were there any Soviet students around?
A few, but they weren't on our floor. Most Soviet students volunteer to do what they call social work during the summer. They work on construction projects and help on collective farms.

What were your classes like?
We were in class five hours a day—special classes just for us Americans, separate from all the others. The first three hours were seminars of varying length that covered everything from the latest slang to the most popular authors to how better to teach the latest concepts in Russian grammar.

For the last two hours of the day, we were divided into groups of six. In those sessions,

Nancy J. Pierce

we could discuss anything we wanted.

How would you describe your instructors?
They were full of enthusiasm, had excellent backgrounds, and had well prepared lesson plans.

Now that you're back in Florida, do you find that your Moscow experience helps you be a better teacher?
I learned a couple of new teaching techniques, but over all, it was just an inspiration to me to watch outstanding teachers work. Their dedication made me anxious to get back to my classroom.

Were you able to take any trips outside Moscow?
We went to Leningrad and Tallin. Leningrad was beautiful, as I had remembered it. But the secret police were more uptight than in Moscow. In fact, one of my classmates was arrested.

What happened?
He was trying to see a dissident literary historian he had met some time before. This classmate and I tended to go everywhere together, but he was alone that day. He got arrested as he pushed the elevator button in the apartment building where the historian lived. He was detained for 2½ hours, then released. Our embassy filed a protest.

The historian showed up in Moscow two weeks later, so my friend saw him anyway.

Did you visit any schools?
Not this time. When I was in the U.S.S.R. in '70, we went from school to school and talked with teachers.

In some ways their schools are quite different from ours. For example, there are no extracurricular activities. The Communist Youth League handles that. But teachers shared some of our concerns, especially over social promotion.

Are foreign language requirements for Soviet students stiffer than they are here?
Much. Students start taking foreign languages in the fifth grade and continue through high school. Most of them take English.

When did you first decide to study Russian—and why?
I started when I was in the service. The Air Force "volunteered" me to take a nine-month Russian course at Indiana University. When I got out of the service, I continued my studies there.

What made you decide to become a teacher?
I ask myself that question all the time. I had a methods teacher at Indiana University who was so in love with teaching that I guess I caught the disease.

Which do you prefer teaching: Russian or French?
I prefer Russian—not because I like one language more than the other, but I think it's ridiculous to teach a language when you've spent only two hours in a country where it's spoken.

Are you ever criticized because you've visited Russia or because you teach Russian?
Not directly. But when the Korean airliner was shot down in September 1983, one kid withdrew from my class. And another student didn't join our Russian club because his father objected.

I think most parents, teachers, and students see learning Russian as a benefit.

Why?
Because it's the language of the world's other superpower. We can't compete with the Russians unless we know what they're saying or thinking.

Besides, it's the number two language of science and technology, and many of my former students now see the benefits of Russian as a research tool.

TEACHERS AND ADMINISTRATORS . . .

PRINCIPALS
THE NEW BREED

Principals—or so the stereotype used to go—are good ol' boys. They wear crew cuts and baggy suits. If they're in a high school, they can tell you how much their star halfback weighs, but they won't know who's on the honor roll.

They come in two varieties—the kind who hide in their office and the kind who run their school (teachers included) like a Marine boot camp. They're always men, most often white. They pass their jobs on via an old-boys network, giving rise to the rumor that they reproduce themselves by cloning.

Today, principals who fit even parts of this stereotype are a dying breed. A new model is arriving on the scene.

One characteristic of this new breed is that they're *activists*.

"Principals today spend more time finding out what's going on in their school than they did 20 years ago, and they're more oriented toward students," says Pete V. Treibley, an assistant principal at Cabin John Junior High in Montgomery County, Md.—and one of two school administrators who hold at-large seats on the NEA Board of Directors.

There are hints, too, that principals are becoming *disciplinarians* once again—a knack that many seemed to lose sometime during the 1970s. The *Los Angeles Times* observed recently that yesterday's "horror stories" of school violence are being replaced by today's "headlines about dictatorial principals who institute rigid attendance and academic guidelines," resulting in "less truancy and violence and higher test scores."

Tough-guy principals—who make great newspaper copy, but are not every teacher's cup of tea—seem to be found most often "turning around" previously dangerous inner-city schools. But in districts of all kinds, principals are once again focusing on student discipline—often applying techniques such as Lee Canter's "assertive discipline" or NEA's "L.E.A.S.T." program.

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"New breed" principals care about content as much as context. Which means they get involved in decisions about what kids read as well as what kind of chairs they sit in. Here Linda Fait (standing), principal of Oakwood Elementary School, in Utah's Granite school district, discusses with teachers Al Dearden and Sheryl LaMont which software to buy for computer awareness classes.

At the same time, many principals say they see themselves less as disciplinarians and more as *instructional leaders* and *supporters of teachers*. It's not just a matter of principals' monitoring standardized and statewide test scores, but also of showing that they care about the intellectual content of classroom activity.

As Carl Persis, principal at W.F. Burns Elementary School in Oak Hill, Fla., explains it: "When I see an upcoming activity in a teacher's plan book, I'll go to her and say, 'Have you thought of trying this alternative?'"

Whether teachers feel more "supported" than in the past is another question. Each year since 1981, NEA's Teacher Opinion Poll has asked teachers to rate "the support you receive from your principal" on a scale of 1 (low) to 10 (high). The results, which have changed little over the three years: about three-fourths of the teachers surveyed are willing to award their principal at least a *6*.

Similarly, in a May 1984 Educational Research Service poll, about half of all teachers responding (though slightly less at the elementary level) said that *lack of leadership/support from school administrators* is at least a minor problem.

The most likely conclusion from all this: there is a new breed of standard-setting, teacher-supporting, activist principal—but not every teacher has met one yet.

What's caused the changes in principals since, say, 1965? A combination of many forces, including—

► *A general loosening of authority.* Pete Treibley offers this thesis: "As a result of the changes kids were trying to make in the 1960s, principals had to change their styles in order to make the schools work." Principals ended up sharing authority with students and teachers—a role that left many uncomfortable and brought on many early retirements.

A countertrend may be emerging in the 1980s, however—at least in the many urban schools where principals are reasserting the authority they lost in the last decade.

► *More standardized recruitment and selection procedures.* As school districts have become bigger and more bureaucratic, they've tended to standardize personnel practices. Typically, standardizing recruitment of principals involves opening up the process to all comers. These days, it's not unusual for superintendents to convene committees of principals and district administrators—even teachers—to screen applicants for administrative vacancies.

If there is an old-boy network, it's much harder to operate it when every step is out in the open. As one principal told us, "You used to have no idea why somebody got a principalship. Now you think you know at least half the story."

School districts are of course forbidden by law to discriminate on the basis of race or sex in making appointments or promotions. Some—but by no means all—make special efforts to recruit minorities and women. This can mean casting the recruiting net wide—outside the district or even outside the state. Or it can mean making special efforts to identify and then groom local talent.

Lincoln, Nebr., school officials go directly to the ranks of their teaching staff, offering some 20 teachers a year the chance to participate in a leadership development program. Those chosen spend 10 to 12 weeks getting an overview of administrative jobs and being instructed in techniques such as conflict resolution.

► *More realistic training methods.* The post-1960s challenges to school authority brought out the gap between what principals ought to be doing and what was being taught in the graduate schools they attended for their degrees in administration.

The reformers looked to the business world for new training methods and came up with—

1. Assessment centers. These provide three-day simulations of life-as-a-principal. Developed by the National Association of Secondary School Principals, assessment centers are designed to help officials in cooperating school districts make decisions about promotions or training. Participants are candidates for the principalship who want to show how

Mickey Pfleger

In courtyards, corridors, and playgrounds, activist principals like Tom Andrade of LeyVa Junior High, San Jose, Calif., make it a point to keep up with their largest constituency group—their students.

Principals and the NEA

Pete Treibley

Often characterized as "middle management," principals are for a variety of reasons less likely than in the past to belong to the NEA. In fact, at present less than 2 percent of Association members are school administrators—enough to qualify under NEA governance rules for two at-large seats on the 117-member NEA Board of Directors.

We asked the two principals who hold these seats—Pete Treibley of Montgomery County, Md., and Jim Booth of Chattanooga, Tenn.—the obvious question: "What does a principal get from the NEA?"

"What NEA has to offer principals is the strongest single voice for the entire education profession," Treibley answers. "When the NEA speaks, it's listened to."

Adds Booth: "I come from a state—the only one I know of—where principals and teachers are always in the same bargaining unit. We *know* we have common interests."

The Association also works with principals and other school administrators through their professional organizations. NEA and the American Association of School Administrators often lobby the U.S. Congress together on education funding bills. NEA gets cooperation from the national organizations of elementary and secondary school principals on projects such as the NEA child abuse prevention program.

One state where cooperation between the Association and administrator groups is both routine and fruitful is Oklahoma. Not only are the Oklahoma Education Association and administrator organizations in close contact on lobbying, "we also invite administrators to our bargaining conferences," says OEA president Weldon Davis. "We think if both sides have the same information and share the same assumptions, things will work out better."

Jim Booth

—N.R.N.

AN EMERGING ALLIANCE

John Sunderland

A light touch is one way today's principals, such as Richard Orr of Northfield Elementary, Gering, Nebr., reverse old-style ogre image.

well they can hack it when faced with, say, an in-box full of typical principal problems. The ratings they obtain also provide participants with feedback about areas where they can improve. School districts from Maryland to California are now using assessment centers.

2. Internships. Districts nationwide—including Volusia County, Fla., and Salt Lake City's Granite district—also operate administrative internships for teachers and others who have been selected through a districtwide program that may include interviews and evaluation by an assessment center. The interns generally operate as assistant principals or assistants to central office administrators for up to a year. After that they end up on a list—in many places a formal one—of candidates available for permanent slots as assistant or full principals.

► *More skill-oriented graduate courses.* "The better graduate programs for administrators are now emphasizing what principals need to know," says Chattanooga, Tenn., principal and NEA director Jim Booth. "In addition to school law and administrative theory, they're now borrowing from business administration and offering courses in how to motivate and evaluate people."

► *The competency/excellence movements.* "We're going to see even more drastic improvement in principals because of the public's current demand for educational reform and excellence," Booth predicts. "Principals will be as involved in instruction as teachers. They'll have to be trained to make professional evaluations of teachers on the basis of their own knowledge of teaching strategies and classroom management."

According to Cherie Bayley, a teacher and services coordinator in Lincoln, Nebr., the highly prescriptive instructional systems that so many districts adopt for entire grade levels are already forcing principals into the role of instructional leaders.

"If the students don't succeed as the curriculum specifies," Bayley explains, "the principal is expected to step in and help the teacher find a more effective approach. That's hard for some principals to get used to."

► *Teacher unionism.* Agreement seems to be universal that collective bargaining has reduced principals' authority. (They can no longer schedule faculty meetings for Friday afternoons, for example!) Yet at the same time—at least where principals are competent at contract administration—unionism provides one more inducement for the principal to operate as a supporter of teachers and other school employees.

In *Teacher Unions in Schools* (reviewed on page 24 of this issue), Harvard researcher Susan Moore Johnson observes that making the contract work is a demanding task that requires of principals "an understanding of teachers' priorities, a familiarity with contract language, a judgment about schoolwide needs, and a capacity both to compromise and to get things done."

Tom Andrade, a former Association building rep who is now principal of LeyVa Junior High School in San Jose, Calif., has seen the operation of a contract from both sides. "The issue is not whether a union contract limits principals' authority," Andrade contends, "but whether the schools are run according to orderly, fair procedures that show basic respect for employees. In our district, that approach preceded the union contract—as it should have everywhere."

Today, 40 percent of the nation's school administrators are at least 50 years old. That means a lot of vacancies will open up in the next 15 years.

It's fair to say that the training that exists for principals today—at least the best of it—is better than ever. And with bureaucratic, legal, and social changes all working in the same direction—to open up school administration to the talents of diverse groups—some very good people are going to be available to fill those vacancies. *(See box below.)*

Some of them will even be good ol' boys! That is, they may be men or women with ties to their community—but compared to their predecessors, they'll care a lot more about intellectual standards. They'll know both the halfbacks and the honors students.

In fact, if good sense prevails, principals may once more become what they originally were: *principal* teachers. And the schools will be better for it.

—N.R.N.

Joe Di Dio

Scottsboro, Ga., singing principal Billy Bice delights in being student-oriented.

The Principalship: Where The Boys Were, Where the Girls Will Be

One thing that's new about principals is that they're a little more likely to be women than they were, say, 20 years ago. The change is especially noticeable if you look at assistant principals.

According to the latest research by Market Data Retrieval (MDR), this year 26.2 percent of elementary principals—but 43.5 percent of elementary assistant principals—are women. So are 5.7 percent of high school principals—but 15.8 percent of high school assistant principals.

Of course, MDR adds, only 5 percent of elementary schools and 33 percent of high schools even *have* assistant principals. Still, these are likely to be the larger schools and in the larger districts—and for that reason trend-setters. Moreover, other evidence of change in the same direction is beginning to appear. The National Association of Secondary School Principals says the proportion of its members who are women more than doubled between 1975-76 and 1982-83—from 4.4 percent to 10.2 percent. Women taking courses in education administration report finding many more other women in their classes now than 10 years ago.

According to Effie Jones, who follows the fortunes of women and minority administrators for the American Association of School Administrators, "The major obstacle to an increase in women principals is school consolidation." (Interestingly, AASA reports that the number of women superintendents more than quadrupled between 1976 and 1984—from 65 to nearly 300 nationwide; of course there are still some 15,000 men superintendents.)

A historical note: there was a Golden Age of Women Administrators, but it occurred two generations ago. In 1928, according to a recent study by the American Association of School Administrators, 55 percent of elementary principals were women—a figure that's never been exceeded.

So women's status as administrators is improving only if we compare it to the 1970's, when women hit what is presumably the low point in their share of principalships. Just 18 percent of elementary principals were women in 1978; only 3 percent of secondary principals were women in 1971.

Blacks, too, once held more principalships relative to Whites than they do today. That occurred, however, in the era of segregated schools, hardly a golden age. Huge numbers of Blacks lost administrative positions 10 to 20 years ago, when schools were consolidated for desegregation or other reasons. Since about 1974, according to the AASA study, the proportion of Black principals has stabilized at only 7-8 percent of the whole.

Like all women, those in the teaching profession have been affected by the widening in career horizons brought about by the women's movement.

In Utah, women accounted for 3 percent of all principals in 1975-76, but 12 percent in 1983-84. Comments Linda Fait, a first-year principal at Oakwood Elementary in Salt Lake City's Granite district, "Women teachers are arranging their lives so they can improve themselves. They're leaving time for the night courses they need to take for administrators' certificates, for example, because they no longer think of their world as limited only to teaching and family."

Special projects have helped women teachers develop new expectations for themselves. The American Association of School Administrators' regional "Project AWARE" centers put women interested in preparing for slots in school administration into touch with one another. And this year Wyoming's superintendent and deputy superintendent of education (both women) helped set up a similar network, in hopes of increasing the proportion of women administrators in schools around the state.

Not all the improvement in the gender balance among principals can be credited to changes in women's thinking, of course. State and federal antidiscrimination laws have made male favoritism illegal. (For an example of what happened when a Nevada principal did discriminate recently against a woman who wanted to become an administrator, see page 8 of this issue.)

—Nancy R. Needham

RESOURCES

Free or Inexpensive

VOCATIONAL EDUCATION/GUIDANCE

Careers in Computers: The High-Tech Job Guide. Texe W. Marrs. Tells how to prepare for the new jobs—at all levels—

being created by the computerization of modern life. 152 pp. $8.95 at bookstores or from Monarch Press/Simon & Schuster, Mail Order Dept., 1230 Ave. of the Americas, New York, NY 10020.

PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT

What Do You Like About Yourself? Developing a Positive Self-Concept. Shirley Slater and Lee Cibrowski. Describes more than 40 activities designed to help students at all levels realize their own self-worth. 71 pp. $5. Stock no. A261-08456. Home Economics Education Association, 1201 16th St., N.W., Washington, DC 20036.

NUCLEAR WAR

Who Decides? A Citizen's Guide to Government Decision-Making on Nuclear War. Norman Ornstein, for Common Cause and United Campuses To Prevent Nuclear War. Describes the numerous points of access to the political system through which ordinary citizens can influence nuclear arms policies. 36 pp. $3, including postage and handling. Common Cause, 2030 M St., N.W., Washington, DC 20036.

GUIDANCE

Rugg's Recommendations on the Colleges. Frederick E. Rugg. One guidance counselor's pick of the best undergraduate departments in 39 major fields at 336 colleges (including many liberal arts schools). Third ed., 1984-85. 66 pp. $6. Whitebrook Books, Box 746, Easthampton, MA 01027.

EDUCATION/BUSINESS PARTNERSHIPS

ProEducation...The Magazine About Partnerships with Education. A new magazine to inform educators about free or

at-cost support by business for education projects (e.g., Adopt-a-School and loaned executive programs, grants, provision of instructional materials). Every U.S. secondary school principal will receive one copy free via controlled circulation distribution. Paid subscriptions (three issues per year), $12. ProEducation, 5000 Park St., N., St. Petersburg, FL 33709.

LITERATURE

Outstanding Books for the College Bound. Mary Ann Paulin and Susan Berlin, compilers. Contains some 600 titles—in fiction, nonfiction, biography, performing arts—culled from past annual lists published by the American Library Association's Young Adult Services Division. Titles range from *Lysistrata* to *Man of La Mancha*, *The Count of Monte Christo* to *Zorba the Greek*. 92 pp. $5.95. ISBN 0-8389-3302-5. Publishing Services, American Library Association, 50 E. Huron St., Chicago, IL 60611.

SCIENCE

How To Dissect: Exploring with Probe and Scalpel. William Berman. In this fourth edition the author (a retired high school science chair) adds two new animals—the clam and the perch—to the eight whose dissection he covered before. 224 pp. Library-bound, $9.95; paper, $5.95. At bookstores or from Arco Publishing, Inc., 215 Park Ave., S., New York, NY 10003.

DRUNKEN DRIVING

Driving the Drunk Off the Road: A Handbook for Action. Sandy Golden. A manual for student groups (such as SADD, Students Against Drunk Driving) seeking to persuade government to give top priority to reducing drunken driving, which takes 25,000 lives a year. 178 pp. $7.95, including postage and handling. Sandy Golden, 21 Quince Mill Ct., Gaithersburg, MD 20878.

SOCIAL STUDIES

Computing in the Social Studies Classroom. Allen Glenn and Don Rawitsch. Describes how social studies teachers might use computers in teaching, discusses criteria for selecting software, names directories and other sources of information about social studies courseware. 48 pp. Price per copy on prepaid orders: $3.50, 1-4 copies; $3.15, 5-9; $2.80, 10-99; $2.45, 100 or more. On orders not prepaid, add $2.50 for processing. International Council for Computers in Education, University of Oregon, 1787 Agate, Eugene, OR 97403.

TV Tips

NEA recommends the following broadcasts to members, students, and their families:

Children in the Crossfire—*NBC-TV, Monday, December 3, 9-11 p.m. ET.* Drama based on true story of children from war-torn Northern Ireland who enjoy a six-week summer respite in American homes. (Contact your local NBC station for a free teaching guide.)

ABC Afterschool Specials—*ABC-TV, Wednesdays, 4:30-5:30 p.m. ET. December 5:* "Andrea's Story." Tragedy results when a young girl hitchhikes. *December 19:* "The Celebrity and the Arcade Kid." Contemporary version of Mark Twain's *The Prince and the Pauper.*

It Came Upon a Midnight Clear—*week of December 8; check local listings for stations, dates, and times.* Mickey Rooney stars in this two-hour tale about a retired detective who promises his grandson a trip to New York, only to suffer a heart attack before they can leave.

The Sun Also Rises—*NBC-TV, Sunday, December 9, 9-11 p.m. ET, and Monday, December 10, 9-11 p.m. ET.* Two-part miniseries based on the Ernest Hemingway classic. (Contact your local NBC station for a free teaching guide.)

In "Children in the Crossfire," Charles Haid of "Hill Street Blues" plays an American father who shows two Belfast girls—one Catholic, one Protestant—that they can live together in harmony. Geraldine Hughes, a native of Belfast, plays one of his "summertime daughters."

Wonderworks—*PBS, Mondays starting December 10; check local listings for times.* New series dealing with adolescents' relationships with their families. *December 10, 17, and 24:* "Box of Delights." This three-part BBC special, based on John Masefield's 1939 book of the same name, will be simulcast in England and the U.S.

Contract for Life—*CBS-TV, Tuesday, December 11, 4:30-5:30 p.m. ET.* Story about the origins and workings of Students Against Drunk Driving (SADD).

Camille—*CBS-TV, Tuesday, December 11, 9-11 p.m. ET.* Hallmark Hall of Fame presents Alexander Dumas' romantic tale of a wealthy Parisian courtesan who falls in love with the son of a distinguished French family.

Jewel in the Crown—*PBS, Sundays beginning December 16, 9-10 p.m. ET (first show is 9-11 p.m. ET).* 14-part "Masterpiece Theatre" series based on *The Raj Quartet* by Paul Scott. Lives of British and Indian citizens are changed irrevocably by turbulent events preceding India's independence.

A Christmas Carol—*CBS-TV, Monday, December 17, 8-10 p.m. ET.* Charles Dickens' classic—another in the Library of Congress "Read More About It" series—stars George C. Scott and Susannah York.

Correction

The listing for **Old Enough To Care** in our October issue misstated the subject of this six-part PBS series. We should have said the telecasts teach about the process of *aging.*

Idea Exchange

Picking Partners, Choosing Teams

Activities that require choosing teams or partners mean humiliation for students who are always the last chosen, and it's a humiliation that can turn them off to school completely.

Fourth grade teacher Lois Callaghan of the Parkway School in Paramus, N.J., has developed a method of teaming up that not only spares the less popular or less academically able children from embarrassment but helps all her students grow in respect for one another.

She turns "pick a partner" or "pick a team" into "pick a number." If Callaghan has 24 children in her class and wants them to work in pairs, she uses 24 index cards in two sets numbered from 1 to 12 (for 25 students, make three cards numbered 12). She shuffles all the cards and puts them in a box, then each child draws one. The students with matching cards get together.

"The children soon discover the fun of getting to know one another as individuals, not classroom stereotypes," Callaghan reports. "Boys find they can work with girls, and slower children either get help from a classmate or find they can be leaders themselves."

Cross-Continental Paper Chase

Students at West Branch Elementary School in Morrisdale, Pa., have taken a new interest in reading, reports fourth grade teacher Van Johnson, since they've become journalists.

After West Branch students, K-6, publish an issue of their monthly newspaper, *The Little Brave*, they not only each get a copy, but they exchange it for student papers produced in 23 U.S. and two Canadian school districts.

"It motivates them to do their best drawings, penmanship, and writing," Johnson says—"especially when they know it's going out across the whole continent."

The project also gives the kids something to talk about at home with their parents, he notes. Many of his students have gone on to write for their high school newspapers and yearbooks.

Johnson hopes to expand the paper exchange program this year to Mexico and England.

You Can Do It If You Try

Want to reduce tardiness, truancy, class cutting, classroom problems, suspensions, and the loss of library books?

Larry Nissim offers a "Positive Discipline Program" he says has done all that at the Crittenden Middle School in Mountain View, Calif., where he's vice-principal.

At the beginning of each month, all students are classified as Doers. As the month goes on, any student who is late to school three times, cuts a class, gets two behavior referrals, or otherwise breaks the rules becomes a Tryer.

Tryers miss out on all activities for the remainder of that month, from student government and after-school sports to dances and noon games. They're also ineligible to attend the special school entertainment program—a play, film, or concert—that rewards Doers at the end of the month.

Teachers remind students of the rules and post schedules of Doers' events.

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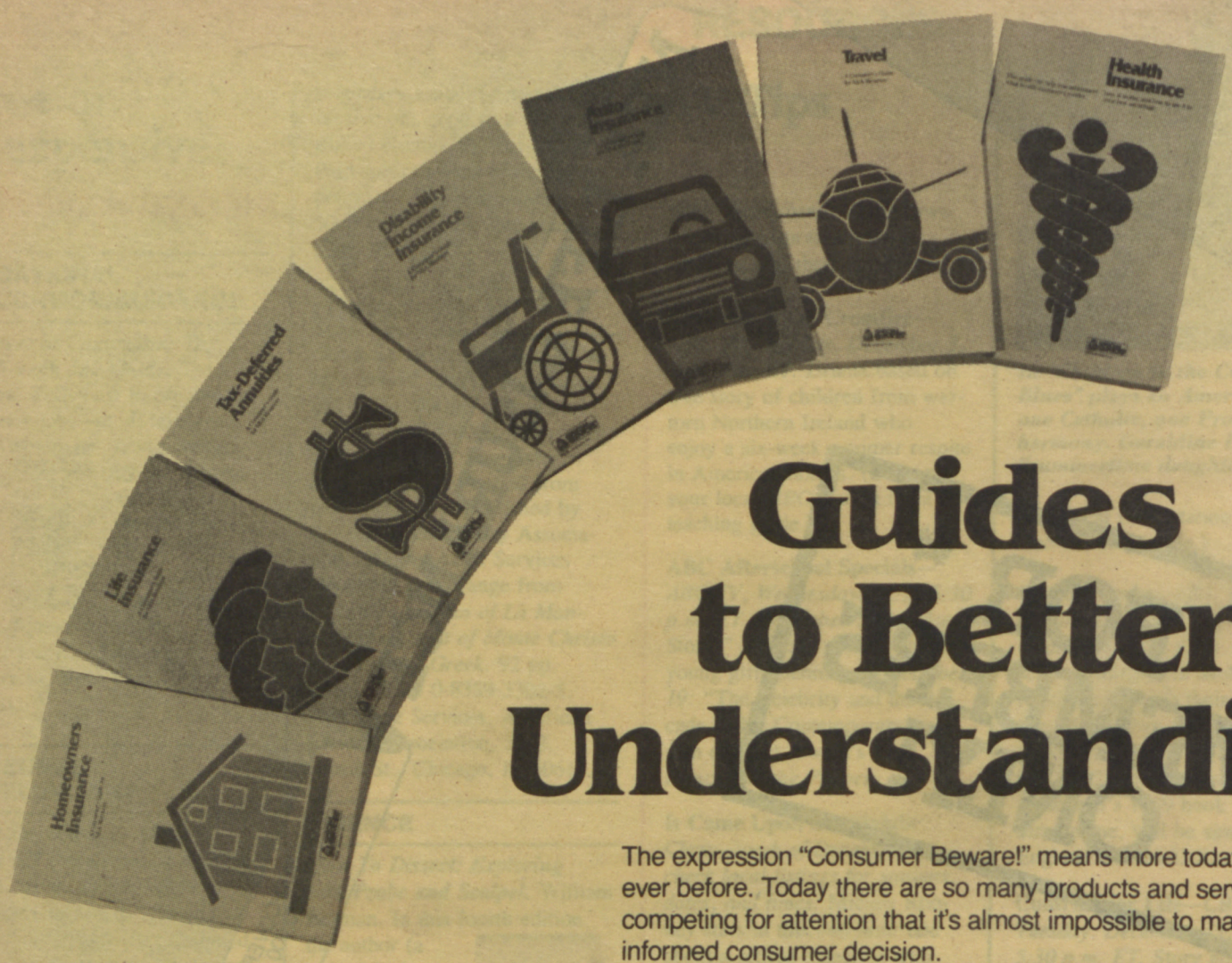

Guides to Better Understanding

The expression "Consumer Beware!" means more today than ever before. Today there are so many products and services competing for attention that it's almost impossible to make an informed consumer decision.

Your Association can help take the confusion out of consumer decisions with our series of consumer guides. Available on a wide range of topics, the guides are yours *free* for the asking, and have just been revised to include up-to-the-minute information. So, read our consumer guides and change "Consumer Beware" to "Consumer Aware." And when the time comes to make a purchase, there's a good chance you'll save some money in the bargain!

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Do you know the difference between HO-1 and HO-3 coverage? Learn what to look for in a policy and how much coverage you really need.

Life Insurance

Which is better for you—whole life or decreasing term? Find out which type and what amount of coverage you need to protect your family's life-style.

Tax-Deferred Annuities

How do TDA's save you money today? This completely revised guide explains everything you need to know about this valuable investment opportunity. There's also a special supplement that provides guidelines for evaluating individual TDA products.

Disability Income Insurance

Do you know the legal definition of disability? It could mean all the difference to your family's standard of living. Learn how you and your family can be financially secure in the face of a crippling disability.

Auto Insurance

Do you really understand No-Fault Coverage? This guide explains all the facts and intricacies of this highly complex insurance.

Travel

Do you know the difference between Excursion Fares and Group Inclusive Tours? This guide offers the consumer savvy you need to keep both travel costs and headaches to a minimum.

Health Insurance

Do you understand your current health insurance policy? This guide, the newest in our series, explains basic health coverage, Major Medical, HMO's, Individual Health Insurance and more.

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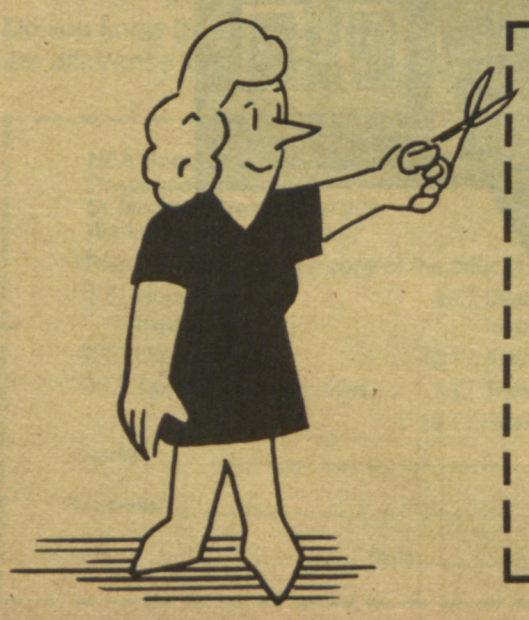

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Begging for Learning

Visiting NEA members wonder what would happen if U.S. supported classrooms, not *contras*, in Nicaragua.

by Mark Simon and Jerry Buttrey

They looked, at first glance, like the child beggars a tourist can see all over Latin America. But these children in the Nicaraguan city of Esteli were beggars with a difference.

Theirs was a hunger for learning. They didn't ask us for food or money. They wanted pencils. They wanted ballpoints. And they were why we—a group of 20 educators from across the U.S.—had come to Nicaragua.

Ours was one of several groups of U.S. educators to visit Nicaragua this past summer to see firsthand why U.S. policy toward that country has been so controversial. We had all heard conflicting reports about Nicaragua's Sandinista government. We knew Nicaragua had won a 1980 United Nations award for its national literacy campaign. We also knew that the Reagan Administration—which opposes Nicaraguan policy toward its Latin American neighbors—was funding attacks on Nicaragua by insurgents based in Honduras.

Was the real Nicaragua a menace to its neighbors or a model for literacy? As educators, we wanted to find out for ourselves.

From our street encounters in Esteli, we drew two conclusions that were reinforced repeatedly during our visit. First, the Nicaraguan government has clearly instilled in Nicaraguans of all ages a strong desire for *alfabetismo*—literacy. Second, the country suffers from a striking shortage of educational materials. A major share of Nicaragua's resources is now diverted to defend against the *contras*, the U.S.–backed insurgents.

In the small village of El Regadio, about 40 miles from the Honduran border, the impact of diverting funds to thwart *contra* intervention is stark. The school we visited housed pre-school through sixth grade facilities, as well as an adult education program.

Proudly, one of the 11 teachers responsible for 270 students told us that prior to the overthrow of Nicaragua's dictatorial Somoza regime in 1979, there was a primary school in El Regadio—but few children in it. Today, she said, there are no "forgotten children."

We noticed quickly that textbooks and pencils were in short supply. We asked the teacher about it.

"In the best of times," she reflected, "our first goal would be education, but because of the *contra* pressure, the first choice has to be defense."

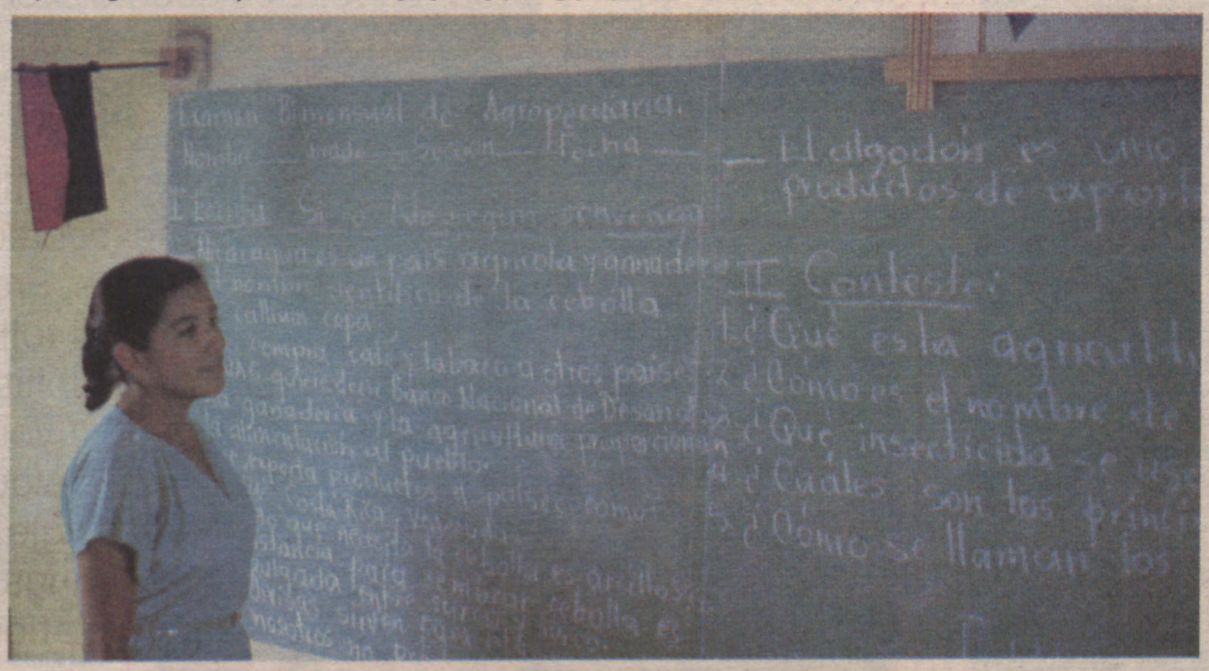
In a village as close to the Honduran border as El Regadio, teachers have good reason to worry about defense against the *contras*. We had met a priest—Father Bravo—the day before in Esteli. He explained that six weeks earlier 1,000 well-equipped *contras* had attacked a nearby community. Fifty-six houses were burned to the ground. Five hundred people fled and took refuge in a church.

Educators seem to be the particular targets of *contra* violence. Many have been assassinated. And it is their work as teachers—preparing young people for productive futures in the Sandinista society—that makes them targets.

On a Nicaraguan school playground in the border city of Jalapa, a student tests out an air-raid shelter. Attacks by contra *guerrillas have placed schools in Nicaragua's border areas on constant alert.*

But that work goes on. We arrived at one primary school during an afternoon recess and found about 300 students crowded in a rather small patio. The school, we were told, was on triple session. There were 900 students in all—and only eight classrooms.

The school's principal had moved her desk to the hall in order to give all students access to a classroom. Her school is typical: because enrollments have doubled—from 500,000 to a million nationwide—since the 1979 revolution, triple sessions are common.



Enrollment in Nicaraguan schools is up, but teachers are frustrated by supply shortages. Many of Nicaragua's scarce budget resources have been diverted to the war effort against the contras.

Over the five years since 1979, Nicaragua's new government has increased the nation's education budget fivefold. But that increased funding isn't enough to make up for the years of educational neglect under the Somoza regime.

Still, there's progress. The dean of education at the National University in Managua explained to us that the Sandinista regime has increased access to education at every level, including the university. One new program gives farmworkers and urban workers—young men and women who would never have considered college previously—a chance to prepare for the university. These students receive free room and board, and tuition is nominal. Acceptance into this three-year college preparatory program is based on academic achievement.

NEA's Official Stand

"The National Education Association urges the U.S. government to refrain from any U.S. plan for overt or covert action that would destabilize Nicaragua or would adversely affect that government's successful campaign against illiteracy."

—NEA Resolution I-11, adopted by vote of the Representative Assembly, 1982.

Our Nicaraguan teacher hosts invariably concluded our conversations with a two-part request. They wanted us to tell our colleagues all that we had seen, and they wanted us to take their warm regards to the American people. They told us they could differentiate between the American people and the U.S. government's policy of support for the *contras*.

On August 3, at the American embassy in Managua, our group of 20 met with a representative of the U.S. government—consul general Bob Fretz. Fretz was quick to dismiss the significance of Nicaragua's literacy effort, which has reduced illiteracy—according to the Nicaraguan government—from over 50 to under 13 percent.

A lot of people did learn to read from the literacy campaign, said Fretz, but they didn't learn very well. He added that the real purpose of the reading program appeared to be an introduction to Marxist doctrine and Marxist literature, rather than literacy in itself.

Fretz charged that Nicaragua's Sandinista regime continues to fully support and arm the rebels in El Salvador. He told us, however, that he could not reveal the evidence for security reasons.

We asked Fretz if, as a diplomat, he found the U.S. support for the *contras* a violation of international law. "It would be easier if the U.S. could just declare war on Nicaragua," he told us. "Then we wouldn't have to worry about international law."

As teachers, we were concerned about what our government was supporting and what it was choosing not to support. Our priority is education. Our government's appears to be something else.

Mark Simon teaches social studies at Bethesda-Chevy Chase High School in Montgomery County, Md. Jerry Buttrey teaches history at St. Andrew's School in Austin, Texas. NEA members who went with them to Nicaragua included Carol Forrest of Lawrence, N.J.; Sharon Banks of San Jose, Calif.; Sarah Kulberg of Mount Diablo, Calif.; Marilyn Risnes of Minneapolis, Minn.; and Margaret Shepard of Albany, Calif.

The Committee for Peace with Justice in Central America, an ad hoc group of concerned citizens, handled arrangements for the trip.

Resources for Teaching on International Issues

Where do you go to find current information and classroom materials on world hunger, population trends, the arms race, or the situation in Central America? NEA members now have a new—and free—guide to resources on these and other international issues.

Resources for Education in Global Issues is a computer-based, global information resource center and a joint effort of NEA and Global Perspectives in Education (GPE). Global Perspectives is a New York-based, nonprofit, nonpartisan national organization that's a recognized leader in global education concerns. For several years GPE has operated a clearinghouse of resource materials on international issues.

"We're dealing with a rapidly changing field," says John DeMars, director of NEA Peace Programs and International Relations. "This program will give NEA members quick access to the latest information." DeMars adds that on controversial issues, differing points of view will be represented on the resource lists.

Thanks to NEA funding of the program, the service is free to members. For further information, contact Resources for Education in Global Issues, Global Perspectives in Education, 218 E. 18th St., New York, NY 10003 (212/228-2470). When requesting a resource list, please indicate grade level and be specific about the subject matter you're interested in.

—Heidi Steffens

People

Mark Peterson

The Stillwater, Minn., class is a special one. It's well equipped, with resources running the gamut from basic reading and math books to computer terminals. The students are adults, ranging in age from 20 to 50. Each is serving time in the Stillwater Correctional Facility.

The teacher is special, too. He's NEA member **Dennis Weir**, the 1984 National Correctional Teacher of the Year. Criminal justice officials, including U.S. Supreme Court Justice Warren Burger, have recognized Weir's correctional education program as one of the best in the country.

His students first complete a program in basic studies. "We want them to leave here with the ability to read, write, and do math," Weir says. After they get through the basics, they're allowed to concentrate on chosen vocational trades, including chef's training and programs in nutrition, welding, machinery, and auto body work.

What makes the Stillwater program so successful?

"The teacher is only half the educational process," Weir believes. "The student has to be interested, because he's the other half. Most of the prisoners who choose to go back to school are genuinely interested in their future."

© Bob Riha Jr.

If you think all those who chair the boards of leading megabuck enterprises are stamped out of the same corporate mold, meet **Judith Powell**.

She's an English teacher at Jordan High School in Long Beach, Calif., and a former president of the Teachers Association of Long Beach. She also chairs the board of directors of the California State Teachers Retirement System—the nation's second largest teachers' retirement system—whose $13 billion in assets give it the financial complexity of a mid-sized corporation.

When Powell assumed the reins of power a year ago, the retirement system was just starting to recover from its scandal-rocked past. A savings and loan official who served as a previous board chair turned out later to have been wanted by the FBI. He managed to tie up $50 million of the fund's assets in a questionable investment scheme.

Powell has served on the 11-member board since August 1982, when she was appointed by former Gov. Jerry Brown on the recommendation of the California Teachers Association. The expertise she demonstrated as a board member prompted the board to elect her to the system's highest office in November 1983.

Among duties mapped out for Powell are chairing the board's investment committee, testifying before the legislature, and speaking to teacher and retiree groups.

In each of those roles, she reflects the convictions that only a teacher could bring to the job.

"It's the teachers who will need to survive on the retirement income afforded them from this system," Powell asserts, "so it must be the teachers who have the strongest voice in shaping the direction of this system."

Henry Hosley

Groton, Conn., second grade teacher **Barbara Lewis** will go to Duluth, Minn., this February to defend her record as the nation's fastest cross-country skier in her category.

What's special about her category is that all the competitors are blind.

"All my life, people have been putting me in boxes, telling me what I can and can't do," Lewis says. "They say, 'You're blind. You can't ski—you could get hurt.' I may be blind but there's nothing wrong with my legs. I was given a beautiful pair of legs," she laughs.

Lewis, who skis next to a guide, won gold medals in both the 1982 and 1983 Nordic skiing five- and ten-mile races, sponsored by the United States Association of Blind Athletes. Her times at the games were 14.22 and 27.5 minutes respectively—better than all but three of the men's times. Last January, she represented the U.S. at the third World Winter Games for the Disabled in Innsbruck, Austria, bringing home a silver medal for a relay event.

While Lewis had enjoyed cycling, aerobics, running, and swimming for years, it wasn't till she was 42 that she got the encouragement to try cross-country skiing. Now six years into the sport, she's hooked.

"I didn't discover skiing till late in life," she says, "but it's become my life."

Scott McNeill

Media stars used to get "discovered" in drugstores. Oklahoma Association member **Barbara Phipps** was discovered in November 1983 on an airplane flight grounded for eight hours because of bad weather.

"A fellow passenger," she explains, "turned out to be TV producer John Brooks, famous in Oklahoma as 'The Voice of Sooner Football.'"

The tale unfolded like an old MGM musical. Phipps had with her some stories she had written for her kindergarten students in Healdton, Okla. Brooks not only read them but saw in them the potential for a children's radio show, hosted by Phipps.

The big break came last May, when her 15-minute weekly program "Hello, Mrs. Phipps" made its debut in Oklahoma City.

Now the program, which specializes in teaching children to listen, is moving from 21 Oklahoma stations to national syndication. And Phipps has begun a televised version that will teach reading by sound—using one letter of the alphabet per episode.

Carolyn Salisbury

Portland science teacher Richard Donin first got interested in energy while waiting in gas lines during the 1973 oil crisis.

"I realized that understanding energy and natural resources was essential to coping with the world of the future," he recalls.

Six years later, Donin's interest and efforts created the Portland Public Schools Energy Studies Center. The Center helped save the school system $183,000 during the 1982-83 school year by setting up an energy user awareness program among all school employees.

Center workshops for K-12 teachers range from how to build small solar collectors to the principles of nuclear energy.

The program, of which Donin is director, won two major energy education awards this fall: from the U.S. Department of Energy and the National Science Teachers Association.

Florence Y. Montgomery

"She's sassy and wonderful," enthuses *Prairie Home Companion* radio host Garrison Keillor.

The *Boston Globe* called her act "a warm family sing-along" that "appeals to all ages."

The focus of these accolades is none other than Watertown, Mass., fourth grade teacher **Lisa Neustadt**, who travels the world performing traditional music and folksongs during vacations.

She sings gospel, American ballads, sea chanteys, work songs, and children's songs—specializing in easy-to-follow chorus lines with lots of harmony.

During the school year, she's found ways to bring music to her school, singing for students during social studies classes. On a recent six-month sabbatical, Neustadt developed teacher workshops to integrate music into existing social studies units, focusing in particular on the Black studies program and immigration of various ethnic groups.

For information on Neustadt's curriculum materials, including audiotapes of her performing, contact Neustadt at 245 Main St., Apt. 32, Watertown, MA 02172.

Bob Wilson

Thirteen faculty members at Alexander High School in Albany, Ohio, have formed a musical group and discovered that performing can be as rewarding as teaching.

The group, known as Staff Infection and specializing in early rock, had its beginnings in 1980 when three teachers organized a band and performed at a student Christmas show. Requests came in for a repeat performance, and 10 more faculty members—including singers and dancers—joined the group the following year.

Staff Infection's performances now range beyond the school walls—and have even begun to improve school–community relations. The Albany Lions Club, for example, recently invited the group to entertain at its district banquet.

"We find performing is a pleasant way to unwind after a day in the classroom, and it gives us a good feeling to work closely with each other doing a fun thing for the students and the community," explains Association member **Gary Dunfee** *(pictured second from left)*, who teaches industrial arts.

With him in the photo are *(standing, from left)* **Greg Gilders, Mike Ritchie, Pat Sakadales** *(in car)*, **Raymond Yeagley** *(in car)*, **Jamie Tevis, David Papke, David Danko;** *(seated in front)* **Alane Morris, Maggie McCuskey, Kathy Munro,** and **Rachel Binegar.**

Take a tambourine, washboard, fiddle, guitar, banjo, and mandolin—add a piano, tuba, alto sax, and a set of drums. Put them in the hands of Association member **Janet Ruwe** (a kindergarten teacher in Meridian, Idaho), her husband Lee, and their three girls and three boys, who range in age from 11 to 19. What you've got is an eight-member, one-family band.

The Ruwes' foot-tappin', hip-slappin', homemade music has been delighting audiences throughout Idaho and the Northwest for the past five years.

Their national debut came with an appearance on the CBS Morning News on Thanksgiving Day 1983, before an audience estimated at over 3 million. Earlier the same year they were honored as the Amateur Music Family of the Year by the American Music Conference.

The family's repertoire ranges from sacred and classical through Dixieland to folk and old-time fiddle music. How did they get started?

"We didn't set out to be a family band," explains Janet Ruwe. "It just evolved. We all like music—and we like each other."

Lincoln Allen

Salt Lake City TV weather forecaster **Clayton Brough** can often be found grading papers backstage at Channel 4 between the 5:30 p.m. and 10 p.m. weeknight news.

A member of the Nebo Education Association, Brough teaches five classes of earth science and one of math every day at Springville Junior High near Provo—an hour's drive from the TV station.

Brough (it rhymes with tough) is able to get his act together by 5:30 because on the roof of his school he's got a weather station that nearly duplicates the equipment at Channel 4.

His strenuous workday, which just started this fall, lets Brough, who had left teaching in 1978 for full-time weather watching, do the two things he likes best: work with kids and perform on television. (The set-up also lets Brough's students be weatherpeople one day a week.)

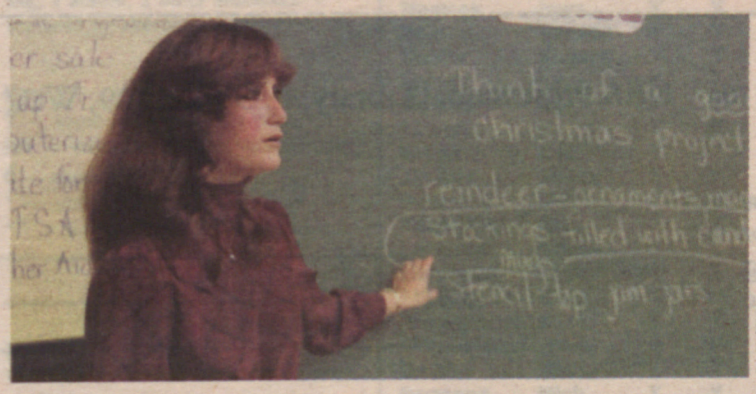
As to whether he can keep up the double shift with long commute all year long, much will depend, Brough admits, on the weather.

Restaurants and day care centers near Franklin High in Baltimore County, Md., as well as teachers and staff at the school itself know where to go to get jobs done promptly and well: they contract with Baltimore County Students, Inc.

This unique corporation is made up of special education students in **Valerie Sharpe's** In School Work Experience class at Franklin. When Sharpe couldn't find appropriate job sites for her students, she had them form their own corporation, complete with bylaws and elected officers.

Besides accepting work contracts, the students make and sell holiday magnets and construct computer crossword puzzles.

"They take their jobs very seriously and are extremely conscientious about meeting deadlines for their contracted work," says Sharpe.



Jim Lightner

The project not only teaches these special ed students vocational skills and good work habits; it also gives them more visibility within the school and raises their own image of their capabilities.

DO YOU KNOW A CHILD BETWEEN 3 AND 6 YEARS OLD?

HOW TO PREPARE YOUR CHILD FOR SCHOOL
nea Parent + Child = Success LIBRARY
HOW TO PREPARE YOUR CHILD FOR SCHOOL
HOW TO PREPARE YOUR CHILD FOR SCHOOL
SHAPES AND PATTERNS
HOW TO PREPARE YOUR CHILD FOR SCHOOL
HOW LETTERS MAKE WORDS
Cup
Hat
HOW TO PREPARE YOUR CHILD FOR SCHOOL
NUMBERS AND COUNTING
1 2 3 4 5 6
HOW TO PREPARE YOUR CHILD FOR SCHOOL
LEARNING THE ALPHABET
HOW TO PREPARE YOUR CHILD FOR SCHOOL
LEARNING TO ADD
HOW TO PREPARE YOUR CHILD FOR SCHOOL
HELPING YOUR CHILD READ
HOW TO PREPARE YOUR CHILD FOR SCHOOL
LEARNING TO SUBTRACT

If your answer is "NO" . . . you'll probably not want to read the rest of this page.

But if it's "YES" . . . Here's something you can't afford to miss!

HOW TO PREPARE YOUR CHILD FOR SCHOOL

the NEA Parent + Child = Success Library.

Here are eight wonderfully illustrated activity books for children to enjoy while learning about numbers, letters, and reading.

These success-proven books are available in book-stores across the country, at $1.95 each. Take advantage of your NEA membership and get all eight books for only $10.92 . . . that's a 30% savings.

ORDER FORM Send your order to: NEA Professional Library, P.O. Box 509, West Haven, CT 06516

☐ **YES!** Send me the full set of *How to Prepare Your Child for School* books. By checking here I save 30% and pay only $10.92 for the eight books.

3281-6-00-D

_____ Payment enclosed (NEA pays postage)

_____ Bill me (Not less than $15)

_____
Name (please print)

_____
Address

_____
City State Zip

Your NEA

REACHING OUT

Call for Nominations

NEA's Standing Committee on Peace and International Relations is once again looking for associations and individuals qualified to receive the Dorros Peace Trophy and the Irvamae Applegate International Understanding Award. The awards are presented annually at the NEA Representative Assembly.

The Dorros Peace Trophy honors the state or local NEA affiliate that makes the most significant contribution to realizing the concept of a global community.

The Irvamae Applegate Award salutes a person who has promoted international understanding through leadership, actions, and support.

Nomination deadline for both awards is March 1, 1985. For entry forms and more information, contact John A. De Mars, Special Assistant, Peace Programs and International Relations, at NEA Center.

Association Honors TV, Radio Broadcasts

Eleven television productions and one radio series received NEA awards this fall for their contributions to the advancement of learning.

The TV award winners were "Adam," the Disney Channel, "East of the L.A. River," "George Washington," "Good Things Happen in Classrooms," "He Makes Me Feel Like Dancing," "The Hero Who Couldn't Read," "Just Say No," "Music Magic," "Reading Rainbow," and "T Is for Teacher." The winning radio series was "Illiteracy."

More than 200 productions were nominated by broadcasters and educators across the country to vie for the honors in this third year of the NEA competition. Winners were chosen by a national selection committee representing Association programs in instructional and professional development, human and civil rights, and communications.

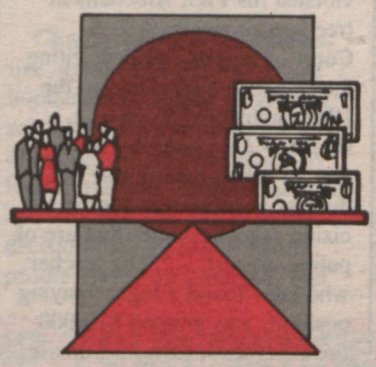
Help Develop NEA's Next Budget

NEA's Committee on Program and Budget invites you to participate in developing a balanced budget for adoption at next summer's Representative Assembly.

You may submit suggestions to the committee chair, NEA Vice-President Keith Geiger, or to the committee vice-chair, NEA Secretary-Treasurer Roxanne Broadshaw, at NEA Center. Or you may attend the committee's meetings on January 18-20, February 13-14, March 1-3, March 24-25, May 2, and May 6 (tentative), all at NEA Center.

In addition, budget subcommittees will hold hearings in conjunction with NEA meetings and regional leadership conferences in the **Southeast**, Jan. 11-13, Orlando or Key West, Fla.; **West**, Jan. 11-13, San Antonio, Texas; **Midwest**, Jan. 26, Washington, DC; **Northeast**, Jan. 25-27, Newport, R.I.; **Pacific**, Feb. 3, Las Vegas, Nev.; **Mid-Atlantic**, March 1-3, North Carolina or West Virginia. Contact your NEA regional office for information about exact locations.

A budget subcommittee will also be soliciting ideas during the NEA Human and Civil Rights Conference, Feb. 22-24, in Washington, D.C. *(story on page 6).*



When Writing NEA...

The address for NEA Center is 1201 Sixteenth St., N.W., Washington, DC 20036.

LOOKING BACK

► To help stop the "brain drain" out of the teaching profession ("Why Mary Ellen Won't Teach," March 1984), the Texas state legislature passed a $2.2 million teacher education loan program last summer. Students must have graduated in the top 15 percent of their high school class to be eligible. Loan recipients who go on to teach for at least four years in a subject area with critical teacher shortages will have their loans forgiven; those who teach for two years will only have to repay half. The state will update its list of critical subject areas every two years.

Meanwhile, Congress has passed—and the President has signed—a new federal law designed to draw good students into teaching. The $200 million Talented Teachers Act will provide college scholarships of up to $5,000 per year to students in the top 10 percent of their high school class who plan to teach. Recipients must teach two years for each year of aid they receive.

► Publishers of materials listed in our "Free or Inexpensive" column continue to report overwhelming responses from *NEA Today* readers. The Aluminum Association, for example, has been getting about 70 requests a day for its free wall chart on how aluminum is made (October 1984). Comments educational services manager Terry White, "Many of the teachers mention specific projects they have in mind, such as recycling aluminum cans, so we're able to tell them about booklets, filmstrips, and publications we have that they might also want." In case you missed it, the address is 818 Connecticut Ave., N.W., Washington, DC 20006.

► Another "Free or Inexpensive" listing that's been a huge hit is *Tell Mrs. Zimmerman Melvin Left: Over 125 Daily Poem Starters for Every Age for Igniting Writing* (November 1983). This 49-page publication is now in its third printing, largely as a result of the 600 orders from *NEA Today* readers. Copies may be ordered from E.T. Johnston-Hale, Gingerbread House, Rte. 7, Box 616-A, Chapel Hill, NC 27514. Cost per copy is $2 postpaid; five copies or more, $1.60 each postpaid; 100 copies or more, $1.50 each postpaid.

TAKING A STAND

NEA Directors Go on Record

Under a policy set by the NEA Board of Directors in 1975, NEA must publish all roll-call votes of the Board. There were two such votes at the September 21-22 meeting.

Subjects of votes:

#1: To authorize an appropriation of $96,000 from the contingency fund to pay for certain activities in the NEA Action Plan To Implement the Report on Educational Excellence. (119 yes, 0 no, 5 nonvoting, 1 absent, 2 other absentees replaced by alternates)

#2: To authorize up to $90,000 from contingency funds to help the Arizona Education Association fight for voter defeat of a proposed constitutional amendment that could bring the demise of collective bargaining. (117 yes, O no, 7 nonvoting, 1 absent, 2 other absentees replaced by alternates)

Key:
Y — voted in favor of the issue
NV — vote not recorded on the issue
0 — absent from meeting
* — alternate director
** — submitted statement of position

NAME	STATE	Roll Call # 1	2
Harris	Ala.	Y	Y
McDanal	Ala.	O	O
McDonald	Ala.	Y	Y
Stitham	Alaska	Y	Y
Beachem	Ariz.	Y	Y
Federoff	Ariz.	Y	Y
**Johnson	Ark.	Y	NV
Gooden	Calif.	Y	Y
Harper	Calif.	Y	Y
Johnson	Calif	Y	Y
Reising	Calif.	Y	Y
Vick	Calif.	Y	Y
Walden	Calif.	Y	Y
Williams	Calif.	Y	Y
Wittman	Calif.	Y	Y
Morris	Colo.	Y	Y
Wright	Colo.	Y	Y
Chapin	Conn.	Y	Y
Gagliardi	Conn.	Y	Y
Smith	Del.	Y	Y
Gordon	Fla.	Y	Y
Scott	Fla.	Y	Y
Aikens	Ga.	Y	Y
Eller	Ga.	Y	Y
Lum	Hawaii	Y	Y
Hovey	Idaho	Y	Y
Price	Ill.	Y	Y
Smith	Ill.	Y	Y
Smith	Ill.	Y	Y
Miller	Ind.	Y	Y
Moudy	Ind.	Y	Y
**Gilchrist	Iowa	Y	NV
Mesicek	Iowa	Y	Y
Cole	Kansas	Y	Y
Gunter	Kansas	Y	Y
Harvey	Ky.	Y	Y
Morton	Ky.	Y	Y
Falcon	La.	Y	Y
Green	La.	Y	Y
McGary	Maine	Y	Y
Doyle	Md.	Y	Y
Kuker-Kihl	Md.	Y	Y
LaPlante	Mass.	Y	Y
Matulaitis	Mass.	Y	Y
**Todd	Mass.	Y	NV
Brown	Mich.	Y	Y
**Davenport	Mich.	Y	NV
Smith	Mich.	Y	Y
Swanson	Mich.	Y	Y
Zook	Mich.	Y	Y
**Thomas	Minn.	NV	Y
Tigner	Minn.	Y	Y
**Armstrong	Miss.	Y	NV
Jung	Mo.	Y	Y
Berg	Mont.	Y	Y
Rea	Nebr.	Y	Y
Anderson	Nev.	Y	Y
Sargent	N.H.	NV	NV
Goldman	N.J.	Y	Y
Johnson	N.J.	Y	Y
Moore	N.J.	Y	Y
Peters	N.J.	Y	Y
Walters	N.J.	Y	Y
Eachus	N. Mex.	Y	Y
Anderson	N.Y.	Y	Y
**Cleveland	N.Y.	NV	Y
Cummings	N. Car.	Y	Y
Graves	N. Car.	Y	Y
Rader	N. Car.	Y	Y
Gallagher	N. Dak.	Y	Y
Augusta	Ohio	Y	Y
Dorsey	Ohio	Y	Y
Jones	Ohio	Y	Y
VanGundy	Ohio	Y	Y
**Black	Okla.	NV	NV
Jewell	Okla.	Y	Y
Cornell	Ore.	Y	Y
Lee	Ore.	Y	Y
Bentz	OV	O	O
*Rollins	OV	Y	Y
Epting	Pa.	Y	Y
Halas	Pa.	Y	Y
Huntley	Pa.	Y	Y
Mechlowitz	Pa.	Y	Y
Mitchell	Pa.	Y	Y
del Valle	P.R.	Y	Y
Blanda	R.I.	Y	Y
Kanapaux	S. Car.	NV	Y
Dangel	S. Dak.	Y	Y
Akers	Tenn.	Y	Y
Cage	Tenn.	Y	Y
Hughes	Texas	Y	Y
Jennings	Texas	Y	Y
*Brooks	Texas	Y	Y
Scott	Texas	O	O
Stacey	Texas	Y	Y
Taylor	Utah	Y	Y
Scott	Vt.	Y	Y
Gant	Va.	Y	Y
Mika	Va.	Y	Y
Wilson	Va.	Y	Y
Amos	Wash.	Y	Y
Bauer	Wash.	Y	Y
Horne	Wash.	Y	Y
Davis	W. Va.	Y	Y
Carlin	Wisc.	Y	Y
Lewandowski	Wisc.	Y	Y
Schleife	Wisc.	Y	Y
Anderson	Wyo.	Y	Y
Jones	Student	Y	Y
Stanley	Student	Y	Y
Santora	Retired	Y	Y
Westbrook	Retired	Y	Y
Booth	At Large	Y	Y
Browne	At Large	Y	Y
Marrone	At Large	Y	Y
Renshaw	At Large	Y	Y
Treibley	At Large	Y	Y
Chase	Ex. Com.	Y	Y
Foglia	Ex. Com.	Y	Y
Lewis	Ex. Com.	Y	Y
Mack	Ex. Com.	Y	Y
Obermeyer	Ex. Com.	Y	Y
Wilson	Ex. Com.	Y	Y
Bradshaw	Ex. Com.	Y	Y
Geiger	Ex. Com.	Y	Y
Futrell	Ex. Com.	Y	Y

** The following directors were not present when Roll Call Vote #1 was taken but requested their affirmative positions recorded: Jeanne E. Thomas (Minn.), William T. Cleveland (N.Y.), and Bettie J. Black (Okla.)

The following directors were not present when Roll Call Vote #2 was taken but requested their affirmative positions recorded: Sid Johnson (Ark.), Robert J. Gilchrist (Iowa), Nora E. Todd (Mass.), James M. Davenport (Mich.), Minnie B. Armstrong (Miss.), and Bettie J. Black (Okla.)

YOU AND THE LAW

Liability Protection: You're Liable To Need It

The McDonald's of the legal world—those chains of fast-action, low-rate law clinics that serve up negligence suits faster than you can say 'Where's the brief?'—are sure signs that the age of litigation is here to stay. The McSue is selling well.

But you deserve a break today, and NEA has already given you one. As an Association member, you're covered—automatically: NEA's Educators Employment Liability (EEL) Program protects you against financial loss of up to $1 million if you're ever sued in connection with your employment.

School-related accidents that may result in expensive litigation—*and* expensive claims—don't obey the schoolday clock. They can happen any time, any place. So whether you're supervising a field trip, driving a school bus, working in the chem lab with members of the science club, or coaching the wrestling team, NEA's EEL protection is with you.

This basic liability coverage provides—

► Up to $1,000,000 in a civil negligence suit.

► Up to $250,000 in suits alleging violation of civil rights.

► Up to $25,000 reimbursement for attorney's fees in defense of a criminal charge (if exonerated).

► Up to $1,000 reimbursement for a bail bond premium.

► Up to $250 for assault-related damage to your personal property.

—Carl Luty

Safeguarding Your Rights As an Education Employee

The U.S. Constitution might best be understood as a statement of your most fundamental civil rights. But that statement is not a guarantee—not if you lack competent legal assistance, not if you're unable to afford an attorney, not if you find yourself alone in a judicial maze.

These "ifs" need not concern any NEA member. The Kate Frank/Dushane Unified Legal Services Program (ULSP) ensures the highest quality legal aid and pays both attorney fees and court costs for Association members whose rights are violated in employment-related matters.

The ULSP is jointly administered by NEA and its state affiliates. During the 1983-84 program year, NEA spent more than $4.5 million on legal representation for members who challenged adverse employment action. State Associations spent close to $10 million.

Roughly 18,000 cases are currently being handled through this program. Many of them deal with employment terminations that have run roughshod over the constitutional rights of due process, equal protection, and freedom of speech and association.

Recent examples of cases where ULSP funding helped your Association colleagues have their day in court:

► An Oklahoma teacher was denied due process and terminated without a hearing. With ULSP assistance, she filed suit. The school system was ordered to pay $110,000 in damages and fees.

► A South Dakota teacher was dismissed from her position as a result of legally protected political activities on behalf of her local Association. A U.S. federal court ruled that the termination violated her right to freedom of association—and ordered compensation for loss of income as well as for damage to her professional reputation.

► A Missouri teacher charged that the nonrenewal of his contract—following his letter to a local newspaper protesting a school board decision to drop junior high track—was an act of retaliation that clearly violated his First Amendment free speech rights. A U.S. Court of Appeals agreed, citing the principle enunciated in the 1968 landmark *Pickering v. Board of Education* decision—that "a school board may not dismiss an employee for criticizing school policies that are of public interest...." The teacher, who later found a higher paying position, was granted $10,000 for expenses incurred in obtaining new employment and for damage to his professional reputation.

► Fifty-six Oklahoma members, forced to take mandatory leave during their pregnancies, turned to NEA and their state Association. The court found that the mandatory maternity leave constituted sex discrimination and awarded the women more than $200,000 in back pay and fees.

—C.L.

When the Going Gets Tough, The Tough Get an Attorney

If you're stuck in a *personal* legal jam, facing a heap of problems that have been mounting ever since the day your son backed the family car over the neighbors' lawn (and their garden and—worst of all—their pink plaster flamingo), there *is* an alternative to "The People's Court."

NEA's six-year-old Attorney Referral Program helps members and their families cope with precisely this kind of nitty-gritty legal conundrum.

The program—now available in 38 states and the District of Columbia—works like this. Each year you're entitled to two *free* legal consultations of 30 minutes each on any legal matter relating to your personal concerns (tax returns excepted). You may consult with any attorney from a carefully screened list provided by your state Association.

If you retain the attorney for services beyond the initial consultation, you'll receive a 30 percent discount on the usual fees for problems relating to real estate, domestic relations, wills, consumer protection, traffic violations, or shattered flamingos.

In the latest survey of members who've used this Association program, 90 percent described it as a very valuable service. And a full 20 percent said that without it, they wouldn't have sought an attorney or taken legal action.

When hassles strain your nerves, you can—because of the attorney referral program—do more than hope for the best. You've *got* the best—and at a discount price.

—C.L.

NEA Educators Employment Liability Program Summary Plan Description

I. INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this summary is to inform NEA members about the structure and principal provisions of the 84-85 NEA Educators Employment Liability Program, referred to as the "EEL Program." Please remember that this is only a summary. If there is any conflict or inconsistency between this summary and the underlying contracts and documents, the contracts and documents must be controlling.

The "EEL Program" is an insurance plan designed to protect you, as an NEA member, against financial liabilities incurred as a result of certain kinds of accidents occurring in the course of your employment, including certain costs of providing a legal defense to claims against you.

The Program is administered by NEA and its state affiliates and is underwritten by the Horace Mann Insurance Company. The entire premium for the plan is paid by NEA.

This summary is being furnished in compliance with the Employee Retirement Income Security Act of 1974 (ERISA). As participants in the EEL Program, you are entitled to certain rights and protections under ERISA. These rights are summarized in Part VII of this summary.

II. GENERAL INFORMATION

PLAN NAME/SPONSOR: The Plan is generally known as the NEA Educators Employment Liability Program ("EEL Program"), and is sponsored by the National Education Association of the United States (NEA), 1201 Sixteenth Street, N.W., Washington, DC 20036, for its members.

TYPE OF PLAN/IDENTIFICATION NUMBERS: The EEL Program is a welfare plan providing accident liability insurance and reimbursement for attorney fees and court costs. NEA has been assigned identification number 530115260 by the Internal Revenue Service. NEA has assigned NUMBER 523 to this Plan.

ADMINISTRATION/PLAN ADMINISTRATOR: The EEL Program is administered by NEA pursuant to resolutions adopted by its Board of Directors and Executive Committee and pursuant to agreements between Horace Mann and NEA. Communications concerning any aspect of the Program should be addressed to Educators Employment Liability Program, c/o NEA Legal Services, 1201 Sixteenth Street, N.W., Washington, DC 20036. The telephone number is (202)822-7080.

SERVICE OF PROCESS: If legal action involving the Program is necessary, legal process may be served upon the Plan Administrator. The agent for service of legal process is Lynn Ohman, c/o NEA Legal Services, 1201 Sixteenth Street, N.W., Washington, DC 20036.

TRUSTEES/COLLECTIVE BARGAINING AGREEMENT: Since all assets of the Program consist of insurance contracts and funds held by a licensed insurance company, there is no trust under the Program and no trustees. In addition, the EEL Program has not been established and is not being maintained pursuant to the terms of any collective bargaining agreement with any employer.

III. ELIGIBILITY

MEMBERS: All active, life, retired life, and student NEA members are automatically covered by the EEL Program.

IV. COVERAGE

ACCIDENT LIABILITY: Under the EEL Program, you are entitled to reimbursement for damages, up to a maximum of $1,000,000, and legal expenses incurred to defend you, as a result of certain "accidents" which occur in the course of your employment. An "accident" is an act which inflicts damages to someone other than yourself. The phrase "course of employment" means while you are engaged in activity which was undertaken pursuant to the terms of the employment contract or at the request or approval of your supervisor. (Coverage A)

EXCLUSIONS: You are not covered if the suit against you is—

- brought by another employee of an educational unit;
- based upon liability which you have expressly assumed under any contract or agreement;
- seeking solely declaratory, injunctive, and/or similar nonmonetary relief;
- any violation of the criminal law, except civil damages arising out of your use of corporal punishment.

Certain activities are also excluded from coverage under the EEL Program, including:

- the rendering of medical or similar services except by licensed school nurses, physical therapists, occupational therapists, psychological therapists, or guidance counselors;
- a publication or utterance of defamatory statements;
- ownership, maintenance, operation, use, loading, or unloading of any vehicles **except**:

1) driver training instructors who are riding as passengers in the course of their work;

2) vocational education instructors engaged in teaching shop; and

3) members supervising students entering or exiting a school bus.

- misuse of public and/or private funds;
- sale of food products or other goods manufactured by or under your supervision—except for home economics teachers and cafeteria workers, who are covered;
- use of firearms, except when physically restraining a student who is threatening others with firearms.

These are the major exclusions under this Program. Please consult the certificate of insurance for further details.

LEGAL AND DEFENSE FEES: You will be reimbursed for the following:

- Up to a maximum of $25,000 per occurrence for attorney's fees and expenses incurred in the defense of any criminal proceeding arising out of your employment except if the proceeding arises out of an action against another employee. Unless the proceeding results from your use of corporal punishment, you must be exonerated in order to receive reimbursement. (Coverage B)
- Up to $1,000 for bail bond premium as the result of an event occurring during your employment. (Coverage C)

ASSAULT-RELATED PERSONAL PROPERTY DAMAGE: You will be paid up to $250 for the damage or destruction of your own property or property in your custody if you are assaulted at school or while engaged in an authorized school activity. Such damages must exceed coverage provided by any homeowner's policy, and there will be no coverage for damage or destruction of a vehicle of any kind or for any property owned, leased or rented by an educational unit. (Coverage D)

V. TERMINATION OF COVERAGE

Coverage under the EEL Program will be terminated or reduced under the following circumstances: If you cease to be an NEA member, or if NEA decides to discontinue the EEL Program as a whole. Termination will not affect amounts due for claims arising prior to termination.

VI. CONTRIBUTIONS

SOURCE/AMOUNT/MEDIUM: NEA pays the entire cost of the EEL Program. The amount is determined by the NEA and the insurance company.

This is an unfunded welfare plan. All contributions made by NEA are applied to pay the premiums on the insurance policy issued by Horace Mann.

PLAN YEAR: The Program's fiscal records are maintained on the basis of an accounting year which ends on August 31 of each calendar year.

VII. CLAIMS

INITIAL PROCEDURES: If there is a claim for any benefits under the Program, you are to contact your state association's EEL coordinator within a reasonable time period and provide a copy of any and all relevant legal documents and a summary of the incident. The state EEL coordinator will thereupon forward to you the appropriate forms to fill out.

If unable to contact your state association's EEL coordinator, send a copy of all legal documents and the description of the events directly to Horace Mann Insurance Company, One Horace Mann Plaza, Springfield, Illinois 62715.

REVIEW OF DENIED CLAIMS: If you or any other person making a claim under the Program and NEA or the insurance company do not agree that benefits are payable, or do not agree as to the amount of the benefits payable, you should clearly state your objection(s) in a letter to NEA within sixty (60) days of the event. A grievance panel organized by the NEA Board of Directors will review your complaint. Write to Lynn Ohman, Manager, NEA Legal Services, 1201 Sixteenth Street, N.W., Washington, DC 20036.

VIII. YOUR RIGHTS UNDER ERISA

As a participant in the EEL Program, you are entitled to certain rights and protections under ERISA, as follows:

- You have the right to examine, without charge, at the offices of NEA Legal Services, 1201 Sixteenth Street, N.W., Washington, DC 20036, all Program documents, including the insurance contract (with riders and amendments) with Horace Mann and the pertinent resolutions adopted by the NEA Board of Directors and Executive Committee for the administration of the Program. You may also examine, without charge, copies of all documents pertaining to the Program filed by NEA with the U.S. Department of Labor, such as detailed annual reports and plan descriptions.
- You have the right to obtain copies of all Program documents and other Program information upon written request to NEA Legal Services at the above address. NEA Legal Services may make a reasonable charge for the copies.
- You are entitled to summary financial reports for the year ending August 31, 1985 when they become available.

In addition to creating rights for you, ERISA imposes duties on NEA and Horace Mann in its operation of the EEL Program. NEA is a "fiduciary." It has a duty to operate the Program prudently and in your interest. No one can prevent you from obtaining the insurance benefits to which you are properly entitled under the Program or from exercising your rights under ERISA. If your claim for a benefit is denied in whole or in part, you must receive a written explanation from Horace Mann for the denial. You have the right to have Horace Mann review and reconsider your claims. Under ERISA, there are steps you can take to enforce your rights. For instance, if you request Program materials to which you are entitled under ERISA and do not receive them within 30 days, you may file suit in federal court. In such a case, the court may require NEA to provide the materials and pay you up to $100 a day until you receive the materials, unless the materials were not sent because of reasons beyond NEA's control. If you have a claim for benefits which is denied or ignored, in whole or in part, you may file suit in a state or federal court. If it should happen that Program fiduciaries misuse the Program's money, or if you are discriminated against for asserting your rights, you may seek assistance from the U.S. Department of Labor, or file suit in federal court. The court will decide who will pay court costs and legal fees. If you are successful, the court may order the person you have sued to pay these costs and fees. If you lose, the court may order you to pay these costs and fees, for example, if it finds your claim frivolous. If you have any questions about the EEL Program, contact NEA Legal Services. If you have any questions about this statement or about your rights under ERISA, contact the nearest Area Office of the U.S. Labor Management Services Administration, Department of Labor.

RESEARCH CLUES

Science Revival: Ready, Fire, Aim

by Joe Schneider

Many of the educational "reform" reports say the nation's schools need to shape up their course offerings in science. At first glance, that suggestion seems sensible.

After all, science teaching in elementary schools is so dreadful that out of charity, critics simply say it's nonexistent. Middle schools fare better, but their science programs are still fraught with problems. The picture isn't so bleak in the high schools—at least not for bright, college-bound students. They generally receive an adequate introduction to science.

Unfortunately, their less bright buddies don't. By the time they reach high school, these kids have been so turned off by their school science experiences that the only lab they'll get close to is a dog.

So, the reformists say, let's get on with the revamping. Begin by hiring more and better science teachers. Then update the science backgrounds of those already in the classroom. Finally, expose more students to more science—and not just the bright students, either. *All* the students.

Around the country, one school district after another is falling into line—increasing the science credits required for high school graduation. Colleges in turn are boosting the science credits they require for admission. Science education has become important again. The current revival may well be bigger even than the post-Sputnik push of yore.

But will the new push for science education promote science literacy? Will the quality of course offerings improve?

The likely answer is just plain *no,* according to Audrey Champagne, a science educator and research scientist at the University of Pittsburgh. Right now she's manager of a school science policy project at the American Association for the Advancement of Science.

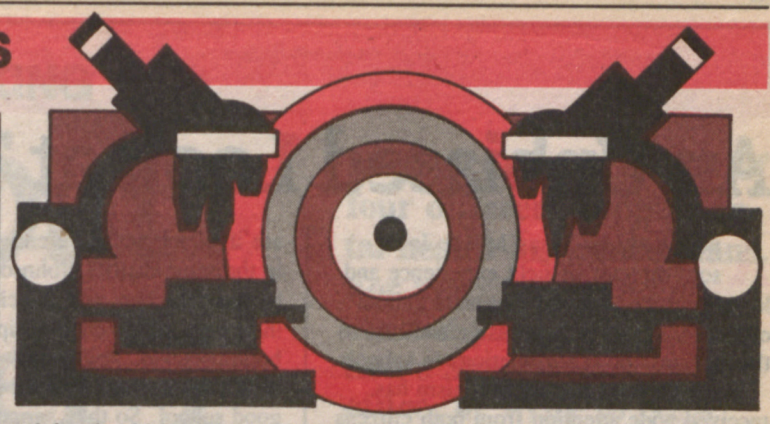
Audrey Champagne's paper, "Research in Science Education: The Cognitive Perspective," written with University of Pittsburgh colleague Leopold E. Klopfer, appears in the 1984 yearbook of the National Science Teachers Association, available from NSTA at 1742 Connecticut Ave., N.W., Washington, DC 20009, for $7.50.

Champagne's uncomfortable talking about doom and gloom in her profession. As a scientist, she much prefers talking about research outcomes, the "good news" side of the enterprise. But the questions put to her aren't about research. They're about the quality of public school science education and the prospects for improving it.

The way Champagne sees it, science education faces two problems. One concerns all those non-college-bound students who are now being required to complete a science course or two before receiving a high school diploma. At present, the "best and brightest" kids get the best teachers. Right or wrong, that's the way it is—and the way it's likely to remain. So when states begin talking about increasing science requirements for graduation, they're essentially talking about force-feeding marginal students, using "retrained" teachers from any discipline that has a surplus at the moment.

Champagne is convinced that this "reform" is poorly conceived. The science-for-everyone courses will be nothing more than traditional courses, diluted. And "recycled" teachers will face a major motivation problem—both their own and their students'. At best, the kids will stick it out and possibly end up having memorized a lot of worthless definitions.

Champagne has an alternative approach she'd like to see implemented. She suggests that schools transform the extra science courses now mandated by legislatures into courses that will help students develop real-life decision-making skills. Most people agree, for example, that



adults should be able to develop informed opinions about the use of nuclear power. One day a student might have to decide whether or not to take a parent off a life-support machine. Or a young woman may need to choose a form of birth control.

These are the kinds of science-related issues that Champagne believes all high school students should be exposed to. But such courses are tough to teach. And the subject matter is likely to be perceived as controversial—a perception that spells doom in many districts. It's certainly much safer to offer an extra half-year of chemistry, even if it's poorly taught.

Champagne hopes the movement toward additional science course requirements will slow down, but she's not optimistic. She also hopes teachers don't end up holding the bag. It's simply unreasonable, she points out, to expect uncertified science teachers to teach science to marginal kids. And it's an injustice to the students.

The regular science teachers are doing the best they can, Champagne maintains, but far too much is expected of them. And that's the second problem facing science education. Science teachers generally haven't been given a chance to update their knowledge of their own field. And in science, yesterday's truths are constantly being exposed as today's myths. Right now, Champagne says, through no fault of their own, most middle school—and many high school—science teachers couldn't pass a tough exam in a college-level science course.

That's a sure sign that we need to bring science teachers up to date in their disciplines. But can we? Sure, to some extent. We can certainly provide them with intensive summer workshops, taught jointly by scientists and science educators. But sending teachers back to schools of education alone isn't the answer. Champagne, who comes out of the science education fraternity, says too many of her colleagues haven't kept up with the new ideas and innovative methods for teaching science to kids.

The nation should be concerned about helping existing science teachers do their job better, Champagne insists. Right now, the greatest threat to that goal may be overzealous reformers.

Joe Schneider is executive director of the Council for Educational Development and Research, Washington, D.C.

YOU AND YOUR RETIREMENT

NEA-R Sets Agenda

The newly constituted leadership of NEA's Retired Program (NEA-R) has resolved to develop a realistic plan to unify state Associations' retired members with NEA-R.

NEA-R's president, vice-president, and secretary explored unification and other key organizational topics at their September meeting with the six-member NEA-R advisory council—the first since officers were elected by retired delegates at last summer's NEA Representative Assembly.

Explains NEA-R President Joseph Westbrook of Tennessee, "We all know from our active membership days that strength comes from unity. We need the strength and unity of a national organization that works specifically on behalf of retired school employees. NEA-R is that organization, and our programs and goals will work to make unification a reality."

To date, the Michigan Education Association and the Georgia Association of Educators have enacted governance initiatives to achieve unification of their retired members. To foster such moves elsewhere, NEA-R will be submitting a comprehensive unification proposal to the NEA Board of Directors at its February 1985 meeting.

Considering other ways to expand the role and influence of retired members within NEA, NEA-R leaders set key legislative goals, such as:

- ► Passage of health cost containment legislation.
- ► Elimination of income taxes on Social Security—and blocking of any attempts to levy taxes on Medicare benefits.
- ► Protection of retirement funds and benefits at federal and state levels.
- ► Passage of legislation for the improvement of nursing home care.
- ► Protection of cost-of-living adjustments in Social Security benefits.

Joe Di Dio

NEA-R officers and advisory council members, from left: Secretary Katie Kendrick, Tucson, Ariz.; President Joseph Westbrook, Memphis, Tenn.; Vice-President Elsin R. Powell, Williamston, Mich.; and advisory council members Val Pullen, McCook, Nebr.; and Frederick Hipp, Lawrenceville, N.J. Not shown: council members Ruth de Prida, Josephine L. Slacer, Tracy Stockman, and Thomas Ryan, Jr.

Retirees Must Fight for Fairness

"I think it's unfair to scare people with talk about reducing or stopping their Social Security benefits....I will never support any reduction in the benefits of those who are already receiving Social Security."

Sound familiar? That's how President Reagan answered Walter Mondale's charge in the first debate that his Administration has worked to cut benefits from the nation's retirees. But a quick look at the record proves that the Reagan Administration has not always been fair to retirees. Over the last four years, programs for older Americans have been cut by nearly $24 billion—almost $900 for each older American.

The biggest dollar cuts were in Social Security ($9 billion) and Medicare ($12 billion). But many other programs that benefit the elderly poor suffered large percentage reductions, including subsidized housing, Medicaid, and food stamps.

"This Administration has continuously worked to reduce benefits for retired Americans," says NEA-Retired President Joseph Westbrook. "The only thing that's kept many of the cuts from being even more harsh has been support for retirees in Congress."

It's critical, Westbrook adds, that all NEA-R members "become active in NEA's lobby-by-mail campaign, communicate with their members of Congress on a regular basis, and continue to contribute to NEA-PAC."

—Eddy Gattis

BOOK BEAT

An Unbiased Look at Teacher Unions

A new study by Susan Moore Johnson, director of field experience and lecturer at the Harvard Graduate School of Education, is an impressive addition to the literature on labor relations in schools.

The impact of teacher unionism has received wide attention from both citizens and academics. But research results conflict because—according to two researchers Johnson quotes—most scholars start out by being pro or con on collective bargaining.

Johnson, who has been a public school teacher, advocates neither management nor labor. In this study, she has chosen to examine in depth the effects of collective bargaining on schools in six anonymous districts, selected to represent the variety of relationships between local teacher unions and management.

TEACHER UNIONS IN SCHOOLS

by Susan Moore Johnson

Geoffrey Van Kirk

(Temple University Press. 176 pp. $29.95.)

Johnson's research method was to analyze the six union contracts and to interview nearly 300 teachers, principals, district administrators, and union officers and staff in the six districts. Her basic finding: collective bargaining has changed schools, but the effects are not as extreme as critics have predicted.

Collective bargaining has introduced new ways to make decisions, set policy, and require accountability of employees and employers; it has altered relationships. But the people who work in schools have not allowed bargaining to turn schools into "impersonal rule-bound workplaces." Instead, Johnson concludes, they have adapted it to their own norms.

The school people most important in determining local labor practices are—not surprisingly—those central to negotiations and contract management. At both district and building levels, the key actors representing the administration and the union establish the tone of the relationship as adversarial or cooperative.

Collective bargaining rights and language differ from district to district. Moreover, the same rights and language are implemented differently within schools in the same district. Johnson says that's because teachers and principals work out their own labor relationships at the building level. Teachers don't want to run their school; they'd rather teach in a good school. So they support a principal they perceive as doing a good job, and they see union membership and contract enforcement primarily as means of achieving a good school (assuming the contract has already addressed their needs for salary and job security).

Principals have lost formal authority under collective bargaining, Johnson notes. Yet determined principals are able to manage their schools effectively even in strong union districts. Using procedures specified in the contract, they discipline and terminate teachers—while living up to the procedural job protections the contract also provides for.

"There was virtually unanimous agreement among both teachers and administrators that collective bargaining continues to be necessary in today's schools—to protect teachers from abuse, to ensure fair wages, to represent collective interests, and to defend educational budgets during a time of declining resources," Johnson concludes.

Her study is an excellent source of unbiased information for school boards, administrators, and Association leaders and staff. It will help school employees make the case for state and national bargaining laws.

Reviewed by Joanna B. Pittman, UniServ representative, Texas State Teachers Association Region 19B, El Paso. Teacher collective bargaining was the subject of Pittman's doctoral dissertation.

Debunking Merit Pay Myths

Is your state legislature or local school board proposing some form of differentiated staffing or merit pay? If so, a new book by Samuel B. Bacharach, David Lipsky, and Joseph Shedd makes enlightening reading, says NEA Research Director Frank Masters.

Paying for Better Teaching: Merit Pay and Its Alternatives analyzes all the arguments for and against merit pay in its various guises. Especially thought-provoking is the section on the real implications of career ladders.

The 72-page book is not available in bookstores but may be ordered for $14.50 ($16.50 for first class mail and speedier handling) from Organizational Analysis and Practice, Inc., P.O. Box 6486, Ithaca, NY 14851. (New York residents add appropriate sales tax.)

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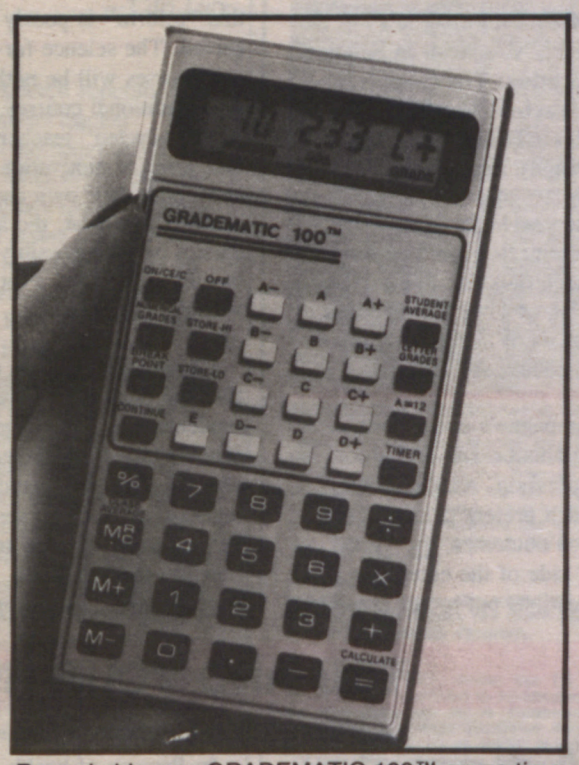

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"In the 10 years I have taught, this is one of the most important tools I have (owned). I recently computed 155 grades in 20 minutes—a usual 2-hour chore." **Beverly Anne Ledbetter, Pasco Jr. High School Dade City, Florida**

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PERSONALLY SPEAKING

Looking Out for Number 1

Backaches, insomnia, tired eyes, aching head. How often have the minor ailments of a hard day at school left you too worn out to enjoy the evening? Here are hints on ways to cope with the health problems a hectic life can bring.

Fortunately, your Association makes taking care of yourself easier with Special Services programs such as the Unified Vitamin Program, NEA Prescription Service, and MemberCare—a family of four different supplemental health insurance plans. For more information, contact your state Association's Special Services office, or write to NEA Special Services Response Center, 51 Monroe Street, Suite 200, Rockville, MD 20850.

Rooting Out Headache Causes

Many of us are all too familiar with that dull, throbbing feeling that cuts into concentration. What causes it? Work environment is one factor. Here are some possible sources of your end-of-the-day discomfort:

► *Interior pollution.* Poor ventilation exposes us to a range of substances that can trigger headaches—cigarette smoke, plastic fumes, photocopier chemicals, cleaning materials, insecticides, automobile exhausts, and other pollutants. Even at concentrations so low that they can't be seen or smelled, these substances can bring on a headache. So can moving from hot to cold or dry to humid environments. If your co-workers also suffer headaches, bring this fact to the attention of maintenance staff.

► *Erratic eating habits.* If your job forces you to miss lunch, your headaches could be due to temporary hypoglycemia, or low blood sugar. Likewise, if you're a regular coffee drinker, missing your coffee break could be the culprit. The solution is to carry snacks with you, and respect your body's need for regular feeding.

► *Poor environment.* Harsh lighting, constant noise, and video display terminals can irritate the sensory systems, causing stress and headaches.

► *Stress.* Sometimes when a person is tense or fatigued, the muscles in the back of the neck tighten. This constricts blood flow to the brain and can bring on a headache. If your headaches are stress-induced, learn relaxation techniques, instead of using pills or alcohol. And get plenty of rest.

Remember, frequent headaches can be a symptom of many illnesses. So if you suffer from them regularly, see a doctor. If he or she finds no physical problems, try keeping a headache log to keep track of when your headaches occur and what you ate and did beforehand.

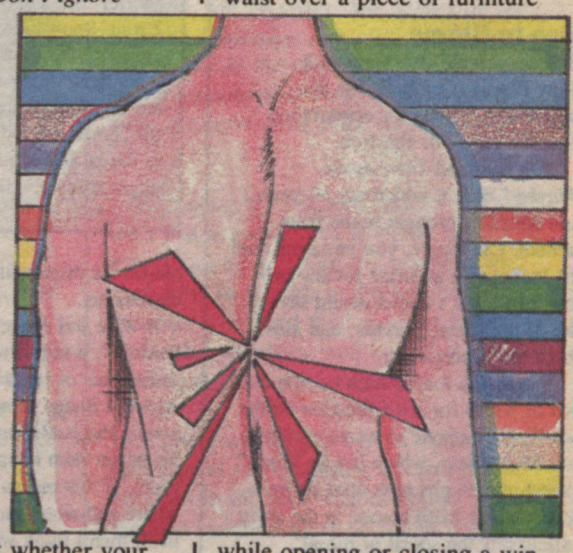
Once you pinpoint the trigger or triggers, you can work to either eliminate or avoid them. If, for instance, you find the mimeograph machine is to blame, you may be able to do that job last and ensure you're feeling your best most of the day.

Back Basics

There it is. You wake up in the morning and your back's so stiff you can't even get out of bed. Or maybe you bend over to pick up a piece of paper—and can't straighten up again.

Most experts say the key to a pain-free back is muscle strength, especially in the abdomen. Weak abdominal muscles mean extra work for back muscles. The proper exercises will help.

If back pain does show up, the first rule is *Don't ignore it.* Most chronic back ailments have gotten that way because minor, short-term warning signs were not taken seriously. Then, too, back pain can be a sign of other illnesses, such as disc rupture.



Start by consulting a doctor to find out whether your pain is a symptom of some other disorder. If it isn't, your doctor may prescribe muscle relaxants, rest, and exercise. But it's up to you to take precautions, and protect your back from excessive strain.

The American Physical Fitness Research Institute notes some points worth keeping in mind:

► When you lift anything, you also are lifting your own upper torso. If you're heavy or tall, you should be extra careful.

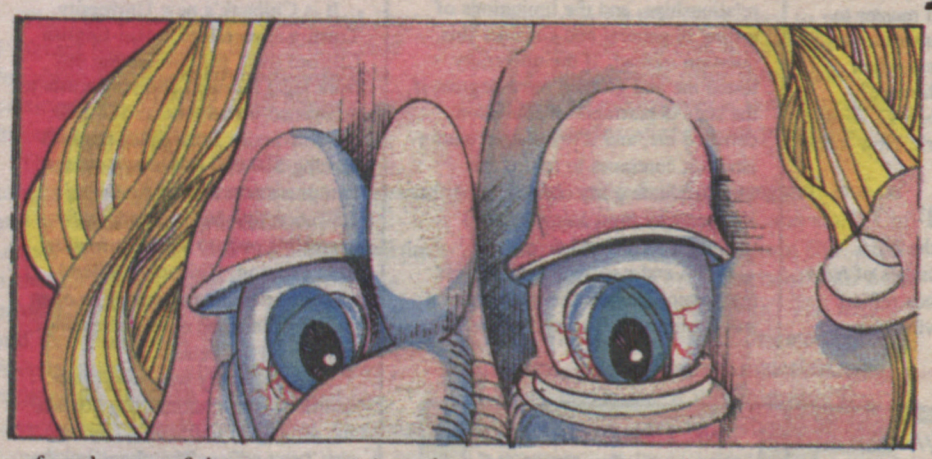
► The farther away an object is, the more effort it takes to lift. Holding the object closer to your body lessens the load.

► Avoid bending at the waist with the legs straight, putting all the load on your back. Try squatting down in front of the object and holding it close to the body while straightening up, to let your legs share part of the burden.

► Avoid bending from the waist over a piece of furniture while opening or closing a window, and avoid bending over the sink to brush your teeth or wash the dishes.

Good sources of further information include *The Back Doctor,* by Hamilton Hall, M.D. (McGraw-Hill, 1980); *Oh, My Aching Back,* by Leon Root, M.D. (Signet, 1975); and *The Y's Way to a Healthy Back,* by Alexander Mellerby (New Century, 1982).

Contact Lenses and Bloodshot Eyes



If you're one of the more than 14 million people who wear contact lenses, you've probably had red eyes at one time or another. More than likely the redness was a sign of eye strain or a reaction to dust or other foreign particles in your eye.

But recurrent red eyes may be the symptom of something more serious, including—

► *Poorly fitted lenses.* If this is your problem, take them back to the person who sold them to you.

► *Lens deposits.* Keeping your contacts clean can often cure red eyes. You can easily remove mineral deposits from hard lenses with one of the many cleaning products on the market, but soft lenses must be boiled. Also, if you don't remove protein deposits occasionally with enzymatic cleaners, they can chemically bond themselves to soft lenses, causing serious eye irritation.

► *Allergies.* If you're sensitive to Mercurochrome or Merthiolate, you may be allergic to the preservative thimerosol, used in some contact lens care solutions. In that case, if you wear hard lenses, try switching to a product preserved with benzalkonium chloride. If your lenses are soft, your only choice is to use a preservative-free saline solution. Thimerosol is still the only preservative used in soft lens lubricants and cushioning solutions.

If none of these steps soothe your irritated eyes, seek the help of your eye care specialist at once. Neglecting your eyes' warning signs can lead to conjunctivitis and impaired vision.

Who Needs Sleeping Pills?

Whether sold over the counter or by prescription, sleeping pills are at best a short-term solution to insomnia—and may create as many problems as they solve.

Research shows that many of the stronger pills interfere with essential stages of sleep. Deprivation of the REM (rapid eye motion) stage or the dream state creates hostility, irritability, and anxiety, while loss of the deep "delta" stage brings depression and apathy.

Rather than pill popping—

► Try a high-protein dinner, and a glass of milk at bedtime.

► Avoid stimulants.

► Avoid physical and mental stimulation right before bedtime.

► Try biofeedback, hypnosis, or relaxation techniques.

► Ask your doctor about clinics that will check your sleep patterns for abnormalities. For a list of such clinics, write Peter Bent Brigham Hospital Sleep Clinic, 721 Huntington Ave., Boston, MA 02115.

Letters

NEA's Letter to America

NEA's *Open Letter to America on Schools, Students, and Tomorrow* (October) was quite good over all. I am interested in the comprehensive study you intend to conduct of the systems currently used to evaluate teachers. This is long overdue and extremely important.

Regarding financing of schools, property tax assessments have been as inherently inequitable as teacher evaluations and—due to the political strings attached—seem doomed to remain that way. Let us do what we can to shift educational financing *away* from the property tax.

Did the open letter really indicate the importance of parental involvement? I don't believe so. I know that nearly every "great" school has involved parents. In rural areas (at least in ours) we have *very little* parental involvement. I would like to see greater emphasis on this critical problem.

Ted May
Adams, Wisconsin

Boo to Blume

Your favorable interview with Judy Blume (October) was disappointing, giving the appearance that she cares for children.

I've just read *Then Again, Maybe I Won't*, which my 10-year-old daughter brought home from school. Obviously, you've never read it! Perhaps an accurate review of one of Blume's books would save a lot of librarians, parents, and kids both time and money.

While you may want a book or set of books for sex education on the shelf, it's pathetic to waste money on *Then Again*, which has its "hero" watching the girl next door undress every night, with no one in the story discussing the social or moral implications. Isn't there a better way of giving students a true picture of something beyond their own view of "what's happening" in their lives?

If describing wet dreams and the like is so necessary for 10-year-olds, as a parent I'd rather have a *complete* book with more than a child can learn off the street. For school libraries to buy any kind of author, just so children will read, and then have NEA proclaim "Blume books" so popular with students is a joke. *Playboy* would be popular too, less expensive, and just as worthwhile.

Mary Pardun
Rhinelander, Wisconsin

More on Teacher Dress

In your October debate, Nancy Roberts seems to suggest that because one's dress doesn't by itself guarantee quality teaching, it therefore is irrelevant to a teacher's success in the classroom.

That's like arguing that because quality educational facilities don't by themselves guarantee a sound educational program, they are irrelevant to educational excellence.

Of course, a teacher's appearance alone won't make that teacher successful, but then neither will any other single ingredient in a teacher's professional preparation. No one would argue that this is sufficient reason for dispensing with those ingredients.

A wise and conscientious professional, it seems to me, uses every asset at his or her disposal to maximize the image of our profession among the public and to enhance his or her own image in the classroom. If this means "dressing up" where and when such dress is practical, then I think we've an obligation both to ourselves and to our students to do so.

Congratulations to David Burrous for arguing this point so simply yet so cogently.

Richard L. Cleary
Dallastown, Pennsylvania

Over the last two decades teachers' apparel has become sloppy, slovenly, and occasionally downright unkempt. Some male teachers enter school as if they were going to a longshoreman's job.

While there is no state law that mandates proper attire for teachers, common self-respect and dignity should dictate it. A teacher who comes to school looking like a slob or a bimbo deserves to be treated like one. A teacher cannot expect students to dress properly if he or she looks like a vagrant.

School administrators dress well. Why shouldn't teachers dress as well, or better?

Of course, a well dressed teacher may be the poorest of instructors. But one's apparel does have an influence on the onlooker. So why not gain an edge by dressing up? Teachers need everything they can muster to impress, motivate, and instruct students. Why work with less when you can easily work with more?

Robert G. Arthur
Kings Park, New York

'Politically Biased'

I am a new member of the NEA. After receiving several issues of *NEA Today*, I would like a dues refund for the cost of my receiving this politically biased publication.

It is obvious that many readers don't care if you insult their intelligence. Well, I do. I'm sure NEA members, both Democrats and Republicans, feel the same as I do.

Erwin Cheldin
Los Angeles, California

Test Teachers?

Let's ignore the ramifications of Arkansas' teacher testing law in terms of public confidence, teacher morale, parent-student-teacher relationships, and the limitations of testing in general and consider this question instead: If the university tested me and granted me a degree, if the state department of education certified me, and if my district administration continues to rehire me after evaluating my classroom performance, why must I now prove I can read, write, and do math?

A pen-and-paper, multiple-guess test cannot identify the qualities of a truly competent teacher. We're going to destroy the careers of some fine teachers with a narrow, one-time test that proves nothing about the art of teaching.

Anna K. Burke
El Paso, Arkansas

American Teacher Finds European Schools Familiar—But Very Different, Too

There has been a flood of studies lately critical of American education as compared with the rest of the industrial world.

I spent the month of June traveling in Sweden, England, Austria, and Germany, visiting schools. I spoke with more than 50 teachers and hundreds of students in 13 schools.

Each teacher I talked with spoke of envy for the status of education in the United States. They complained of the same sorts of things one can hear in most American teachers' lounges: low salaries, lack of respect, class loads, lack of planning time, lack of parental support, poor student attitudes and discipline.

Yet I observed some obvious differences, too.

The school year is longer: 40 weeks in England and Germany, compared with 36 weeks here in Kansas. But the school day is shorter, often ending at 1:30 or 2 p.m. Short breaks or recesses are more frequent.

Students study a greater number of subjects, but each class meets for shorter periods of time than in the U.S. For example, students might study English for one 40-minute period each week, or math twice a week.

Getting students to study a foreign language like English is easier because American music and television are so prevalent. (Wouldn't it be easier to get U.S. kids interested in French if they heard it all the time?)

Extracurricular activities do not interfere with school in Europe. Clubs, which might meet once or twice a week after school or on Saturday, are often sponsored by teachers without pay.

Letter grades are not given below the sixth or seventh grades. Thorough written evaluations are used, instead.

After the sixth or seventh grade, students determine areas of study they will pursue for the rest of their years in school. It's next to impossible to enroll in science in the 12th grade if that isn't your "major."

Microcomputers are almost nonexistent in Swedish, Austrian, and German elementary schools. At the secondary level they are used almost exclusively to teach programming in BASIC, Pascal, or both. There is less hardware than in the average American school—and little commercially prepared software. My middle school in Nortonville, Kansas, has more software for its 100 students than I observed at any of the schools I visited.

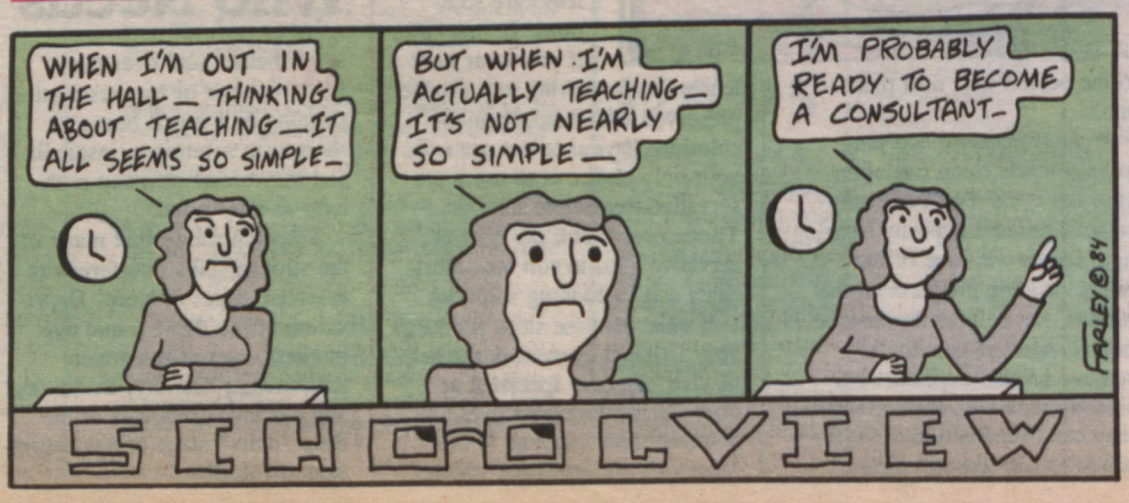
The most surprising thing I found was that European teachers are not required to get additional education to keep up their certification. And their salary schedules do not include raises for greater education.

A study published last December by the *Dallas Times Herald* showed the results of tests given to sixth graders in science, geography, and math. Over all, students in Sweden had the highest percentage of correct answers—followed, in order, by England, Japan, Canada, Australia, France, Switzerland, and then the United States.

Yet as I was leaving a high school in Sandviken, Sweden, a teacher asked me to send him a copy of my school's student handbook.

"There is a feeling we need to make some changes in our schools," he said.

Rod Smith
Oskaloosa, Kansas


WHEN I'M OUT IN THE HALL— THINKING ABOUT TEACHING—IT ALL SEEMS SO SIMPLE—
BUT WHEN I'M ACTUALLY TEACHING— IT'S NOT NEARLY SO SIMPLE—
I'M PROBABLY READY TO BECOME A CONSULTANT—
FARLEY © 84
SCHOOLVIEW

Don't Cut Phys Ed!

Your October "Trends" column states that today's youth are in "miserable shape and woefully deficient in basic athletic skills." This fact is not new to parents and educators—in fact, the trend has been downward for several years in a row.

So why are so many school systems cutting back on physical educators and their programs? Enrollments are down and monies are scarce, it's argued. But the more the physical education programs slip, the worse off Johnny—and Janie—will become.

As you state, two causes of our youths' lack of activity and increase in body fat are TV and the videogame epidemic. Since we know that part of the problem is that youths are less active in their free time than they need to be, this is all the more reason to have successful physical education programs in the schools during the students' structured time.

The solution is very clear: Don't eliminate mandatory physical education programs or cut them into microscopic pieces. Instead, spend some more money to upgrade programs, facilities, equipment, and instruction.

Thomas E. Waite
Upper Montclair, New Jersey

Plain-English Trust

Regarding the "Footing College Costs" feature in your November issue, your readers might be interested to know that there now exists a simplified, tax-advantaged means for parents to save for their children's college education.

It is Citibank's new University Trust, a streamlined, plain-English Clifford trust. By eliminating up-front legal fees and allowing trusts to be opened for as little as $10,000, the University Trust gives families earning $50,000 and above access to a proven method of financing education that has been generally accessible only to the very wealthy.

In addition, Citibank will lend qualified parents the money to open the trust, in some cases increasing the overall tax benefit.

NEA members who would like additional information may contact me directly at Citibank's University Trust office. The phone number is 212/319-1702.

Diana Smith
Vice-President, Citibank
641 Lexington Ave.
New York, New York 10043

What's *your* opinion? NEA members are cordially invited to use this page to exchange ideas with their colleagues around the nation. We reserve the right to edit letters for length. Address correspondence to "Letters," NEA Today, 1201 Sixteenth Street, N.W., Washington, DC 20036.

Debate

Fred Mirlian

Bob Pennell

Should after-school programs for 'latchkey' children be based in public schools?

YES

Association member Leslie A. Egan has taught kindergarten and second grade at the Lawrence School in Brookline, Mass., for 16 years. She's one of the founders of the Lawrence Extended Day Program, which is frequently referred to as a model for school-based after-school programs.

The phenomenon of "latchkey" children is with us to stay, thanks to the continually rising cost of living and the increase in the number of dual-wage-earner and single-parent families. Young children who would otherwise face an empty house at the end of each school day need supervised, safe environments in which to spend the late afternoon hours.

There's unquestionably a need for after-school programs that are affordable and about which both children and parents can feel secure—and there are numerous reasons for basing such programs in public schools.

The Lawrence School Extended Day Program has provided after-school care for about 10 years—to the benefit of participating children, their parents, and the entire school.

The most obvious benefits of the school-based program are the convenience and sense of security it offers. The school is a familiar and protected environment. Its use for after-school programs provides continuity in the children's day and the opportunity to be with school friends during the after-school hours. Neither the children nor their parents have to worry about where they're going, how they'll get there, and who they'll be with until an adult arrives home.

It's hardly surprising that this lessening of anxiety is often reflected in children's improved concentration during school hours.

School-based programs allow for communication between teachers and extended day personnel. They provide the opportunity to see the child in both study and "play" environments, giving additional insights into his or her interests and needs. Some teachers may choose to work in the after-school program, thereby providing highly qualified personnel.

The Lawrence Extended Day Program also benefits students who aren't enrolled. Under its aegis, special pottery, woodworking, photography, and athletic programs have been set up. These special activities are available to any student for a nominal fee, and they're always fully booked.

Schools are not the only possible base for quality after-school care. Community and religious groups also run excellent programs for children. But it's extremely difficult for these groups to find facilities where quality care can be provided at a price that middle class—not to mention low-income—parents are able to afford.

Public schools offer safe, well-equipped environments with excellent facilities for after-school programs.

Our extended day program is a co-operative, run by parents and staff. Children who are in the program five days a week, from the end of school until 5:45 p.m., pay $120 per month. The fees—far lower than those of private programs—cover salaries, materials, and incidental costs of the program. The school does shoulder some of the program's costs by providing the facilities, heat, light, and custodial services without charge.

But these indirect costs are a small price to pay for the knowledge that a community's children are being well cared for, both physically and emotionally.

Our schools offer many advantages as sites for after-school care. It's time to recognize that extended day care for our children is a necessity in today's world—and that our concern with our students doesn't end with the final bell.

NO

Barbara A. Lowe has taught the lower elementary grades at Glenn D. Hale Elementary School in Eagle Point, Oregon, for 14 years. She serves on the Oregon Education Association's board of directors. As the mother of five, she's given considerable thought to the question of after-school child care.

The typical after-school situation of the past—where children went home to a warm house, snack, and Mom—is no longer the norm. Changes in American lifestyles over the past several years have had a direct impact on children. The increasing percentages of single-parent families and families in which both parents must work send many youngsters home to empty houses to fend for themselves.

There's no argument about whether supervised, secure after-school care should be provided for these "latchkey" children. The question is whether this care should be provided in public schools.

Let's examine the schools' purpose. Their role today is to provide an excellent general education and training for future employment. They must also provide preparation for responsible citizenship and certainly a solid foundation for success in higher education.

Budget cuts and lack of adequate, secure financing have made it increasingly difficult for schools to attain these established and necessary goals.

At the same time, schools are being asked to take on more and more responsibility for dealing with all aspects of their students' lives—responsibilities that have little to do with their educational role. Our society must decide what the job of our schools is to be.

When an extended day program is introduced in a school, it's often because federal or other funds are available. In subsequent years the funding is cut—yet the demand for the program remains.

Who gets blamed when the program ends? The school, of course. The result is a public relations problem and a lack of confidence in our educational system.

Providing after-school care in schools isn't just a question of using an otherwise empty building. There are teachers who may wish to remain in the building, students who need the space for extra-curricular activities, and custodial staff who must clean up for the next school day.

Schools simply don't need the added burden and responsibility of caring for children in the after-school hours. Another solution must be found.

Our society needs to define more clearly the roles of parents, schools, and communities. The role of schools is to educate; parents and communities should take responsibility for other aspects of children's lives.

If they work together, parents, civic groups, churches, employers, and other agencies can devise appropriate after-school programs for their communities. This includes finding acceptable facilities, securing funding, and providing trained employees and volunteers.

Such programs can let children know that the people of their community really do care about them. The programs also give adults the opportunity to exert a positive influence on children's lives.

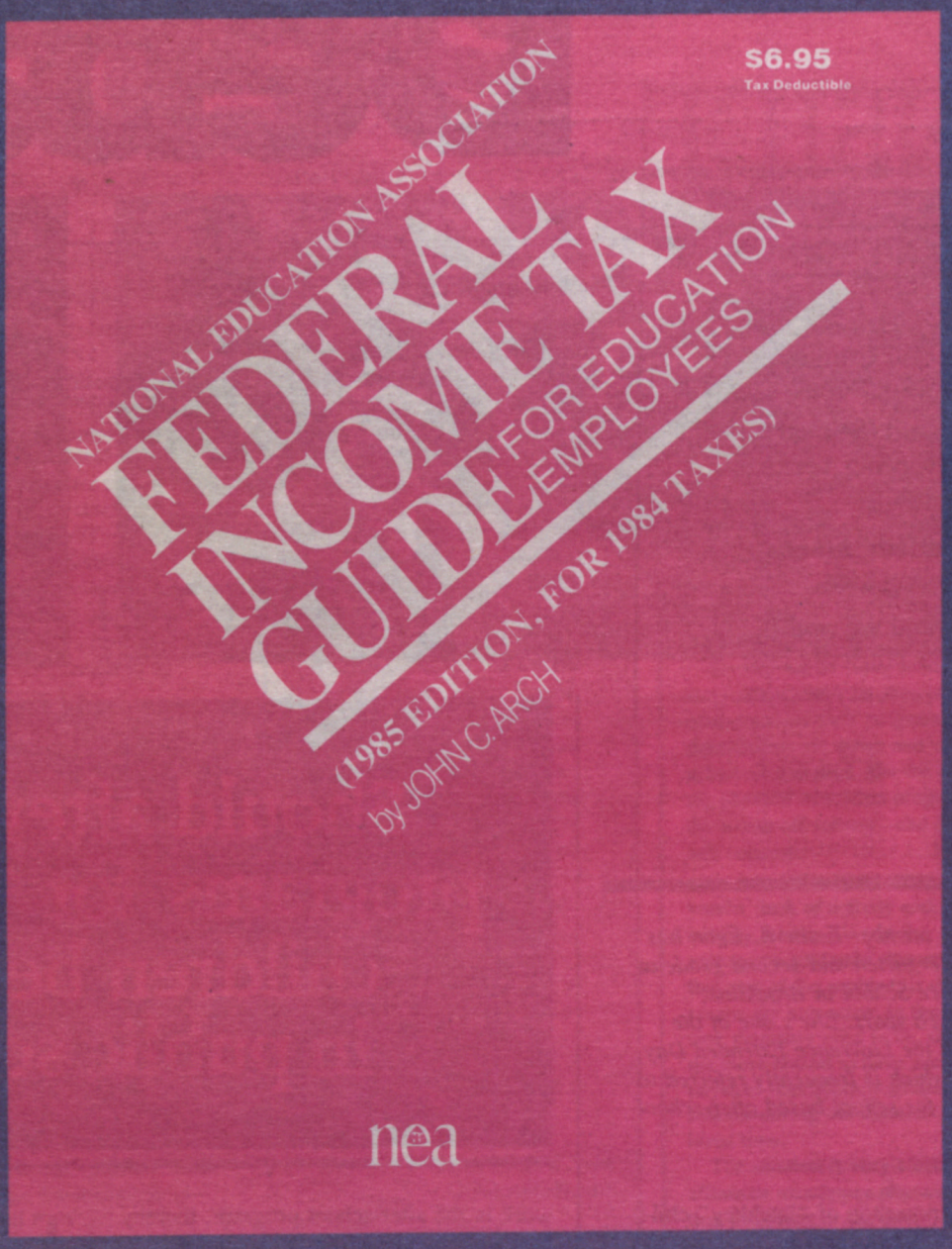
After-school child care programs should become a responsibility that is looked forward to as a challenge and assumed with pleasure. Community and private centers should be competing for the privilege of providing this care.

This would allow our schools to concentrate on providing an excellent, well-rounded education. The assumption of additional roles merely dilutes the schools' intended purpose and changes the expectations of students and parents.

Schools are places to learn—not places to live. Let's keep them that way.

It's Income Tax Time!

Wanna Buy a Duck?



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